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ABSTRACT

A study examined national participation in 4-H Club activities during the 1980s. The study population was a carefully drawn sample of 24,500 eighth graders from more than 1,000 public and private schools throughout the country as well as their parents and teachers. The study established that, as of 1988, about one of every six eighth-grade students had at some time participated in 4-H. Fewer than 3% of the eighth-grade 4-H participants were from families who were actively farming, nearly 10% were from a city or suburb, and only 5% expected to be farmers at age 30. Among ethnic groups, Blacks were most likely to participate in 4-H (20% versus 18% of White and 7% of Hispanic students). Nearly one-third of eighth graders participating in 4-H for the first time had annual family incomes below $15,000. Efforts to make 4-H relevant to young teens appeared more successful at the community level than at the national level. The parents of students who remained in 4-H were slightly more likely to be active in school activities. Little indication was found that participation in 4-H results in measurable differences in such areas as better grades, better self-esteem, and more certainty about future plans. (MN)

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NATIONWIDE PARTICIPATION IN 4-H DURING THE 1980's

INFORMATION FROM THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION NELS:88 STUDY

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NATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN 4-H DURING THE 1980's

The extensive Department of Education's NELS:88 study of 24,500 eighth graders, their parents and teachers was based on a carefully drawn sample of more than 1,000 public and private schools around the country according to a design which permits the findings to be generalized to all youngsters in the eighth grade in the United States in 1988. This report summarizes findings when the responses to the NELS:88 survey were examined according to 4-H participation.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. **Across the United States 4-H was alive and well in the 1980's. Nationwide, about one out of every six youngsters who were eighth graders in 1988 had at some time taken part in 4-H.**

   - o 19% of all eighth grade girls and 15% of all eighth grade boys had taken part in 4-H at some time in their lives.

   - o. There was relatively little difference according to family makeup. The range in percentage was from 15% of eighth graders living in a single-parent family with their mother to 18% of those living with someone other than their natural parents or with their father and a stepmother.

2. **4-H participants in the 1980's were quite different from the image of 4-H participants of earlier years. Alumni and long-standing 4-H supporters within and outside of Extension err if they do not recognize 4-H as it is carried out today as a program serving youth with diverse characteristics.**

   - o **Farm.** Across the country, less than 3% of the 1988 eighth graders who were currently in or had been in 4-H were from families who were actively farming. Only 5% expected to be farmers when they were age 30. However, 4-H is still serving farm families. Among the small percentage of the country's population who farm, 4-H is still a popular program in that 50% of the children of farmers had taken part in 4-H.

   - o **Central city and suburbia.** Almost one in ten central city eighth graders had taken part in 4-H at some time. Among suburban youth (those going to school in a Metropolitan Statistical Area but not in the central city), one in five had taken part in 4-H at some time.

   - o **Ethnicity.** 4-H attracted youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Black eighth graders, 20%, were more likely to have at some time taken part in 4-H than were White eighth graders, 18%. Youth of Hispanic heritage were least likely to have taken part, 7%. The only youth from specific backgrounds who had not taken part in 4-H were those from families which had come from Turkey, Iran, or Afghanistan.

3. **Extension administrators and others also err if they believe that 4-H programs are not serving youth at risk as well as those who are less likely to be considered at risk.**

   - o Over a third of those who had been in 4-H showed at least one of the factors that the NELS:88 study team considered as indicators of risk.

   - o One-fifth of those who had been in 4-H before the eighth grade and almost a third of those who took part in 4-H for the first time in the eighth grade were from families with incomes of less than $15,000.

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- Over one in ten of those who had been in 4-H and one in four of the joiners had a sibling that had dropped out of school.

- Over a fourth of those who had remained in 4-H into the eighth grade showed five or more indicators of trouble at school; 40% of the joiners showed five or more indicators. Like other eighth graders, fairly sizeable percentages of 4-H members were bored in school most of the time, didn't look forward to attending class, didn't see some of their classes as relevant to their future. Slightly fewer of those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade had been sent to the office because of behavior as compared with other eighth graders. However, a fourth of those who were in 4-H in the eighth grade had been sent to the office for behavior problems.

- The new joiners appear to show more NELS at-risk indicators than others who had been in 4-H previously. They may be taking part in newer 4-H programs designed specifically to attract youth with major problems. However, a fairly high percentage of youngsters who had been in 4-H before the eighth grade also showed risk factors.

- 4-H was more likely to attract youngsters from the two lowest socio-economic quartiles than from the top quartile. It was more likely to attract youngsters where neither parent had completed high school than it was to attract youngsters where at least one of the parents held a graduate degree.

- 4-H members were as likely to have special needs (emotional or learning problems, vision or hearing problems) as other eighth graders, and were about as likely to be rated by teachers as inattentive or disruptive in class as other eighth graders.

- There did not seem to be a clear pattern of difference in amount and kind of communication between those who were or had been 4-H members and others. However, it was very clear that many teenagers were more likely to talk to an adult friend or relative than they were to school personnel.

- 4-H members were as likely to smoke cigarettes as other eighth graders. However, the percentage of all groups was small.

4. **Progress appears to have been made in many communities across the country in adapting 4-H to be relevant to early teens. However, few of the eighth graders took part in any of the three national programs which put considerable emphasis on instruction and learning about specific subjects.**

   - Relatively few eighth graders were taking part in 4-H, 9%; Scouts, 14%; or Boys or Girls Clubs, 11%. If the three percentages were added, it would mean that about a third took part in one of the programs. However, the percentage is less than 34% because several youth took part in at least two of the three programs.

   - About a fourth of the 4-H members said they were also in Scouts. Slightly more, 26%, said they were also in Boys or Girls Club. When duplicate participation was subtracted, over three-fourths of all eighth graders were not taking part in any of the three programs.

   - About one in ten eighth graders was taking part in 4-H at the time of the survey. About 6% had started in 4-H before the eighth grade and continued; 4% apparently took part in 4-H for the first time in the eighth grade.

   - Eight percent had taken part in 4-H sometime in the past but had left 4-H by the time they were surveyed. Scouts showed a much higher percentage leaving. Parents said that 38% of their eighth graders had taken part in Scouts sometime since the first grade but only 14% of the eighth graders said they currently were taking part.

   - Those who took part in 4-H were slightly more likely to take part in school subject matter clubs.

- They were also more likely to take part in other nonschool programs. Almost all, 93%, took part in at least one school extracurricular activity.

5. **Some early teens (eighth graders average age is 14 years) appear to be attracted to instructional nonschool programs and school clubs in addition to sports and other activities. However, most youngsters are looking for activities which are much more active and social as indicated by the higher percentage participating in nonschool team sports, the Y, and summer programs.**

   - Among all eighth graders, the most popular nonschool programs were team sports, 37%, and religious groups, 34%. A few more eighth graders took part in summer programs, 19%, hobby clubs, 16%, YMCA/YWCA, 15%, and Neighborhood groups, 13%, than took part in Scouts, 4-H, or Boys and Girls Clubs. Black eighth graders were slightly more likely to participate and Whites least likely to participate in these programs. Participation increased as SES increased.

   - About half of the eighth graders who took part in one of the three programs also took part in at least one nonschool team sports program. About half took part in a religious group. About a third also took part in summer programs such as recreational programs and the Y. Only 13% indicated that 4-H was their only nonschool program.

6. **There was little difference between those who dropped out of 4-H and those who continued in 4-H in relation to reasons usually given for why few youngsters stay in 4-H into their teens.**

   - Those who stayed in 4-H were as or more active in other nonschool programs and extracurricular activities.

   - They were just as likely to be taking supplementary courses such as Agriculture or Home Economics in school and as likely to be taking nonschool classes.

   - They were as likely to be working for pay and working as many hours.

   - They were as likely to be using community resources such as libraries and museums.

   - There did not appear to be a great deal of difference between leavers and stayers when selected demographic variables were examined.

     - With the exception of Hispanics where the percentages were the same, one percent more in each ethnic group left 4-H before the eighth grade than stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade.

     - In all SES groups, the percent of eighth graders who had left 4-H before the eighth grade was slightly higher than the percent that stayed. In most instances there was only a 1% difference.

     - In all three residence groups - rural, suburban, and urban - the percent leaving 4-H before the eighth grade was somewhat higher than the percent staying.

     - Both boys and girls showed slightly higher percentages leaving than staying in 4-H.

     - Regardless of family type in most instances more youth had left 4-H by the time they were in eighth grade than remained in 4-H.

     - Differences were slight across regions. The greatest difference in the percentage staying and leaving appeared in the South. The West showed slightly more staying in 4-H into eighth grade than leaving before the eighth grade.

7. **Regardless of whether youngsters were in 4-H, there was considerable variation in the extent to which eighth graders took advantage of opportunities to build life skills.**

   - Relatively few eighth graders took school courses focused on home and family (joiners, 29% to stayers, 34%), agriculture (joiners, 12% to nevers, 3%), speech or debate (stayers, 9% to joiners, 13%). Less than half took shop courses (stayers, 10% to nevers, 33%), typing (leavers 11% to joiners, 20%) or computer courses (leavers, 29% to joiners).

   - Many were taking some kind of lesson outside of school. However, with the exception of religion, where slightly over half of the 4-H members were taking lessons, fewer than a third of the 4-H members were taking a specific kind of lesson. The highest percentages taking any one kind of lesson in the eighth grade were 33% (stayers) and 30% (leavers) taking music lessons.

   - Most eighth graders were using public institutions. The ranges among the four groups were as follows: Public Library - joiners, 75% to leavers, 83%; Art Museums - stayers, 36% to joiners, 47%; History Museums - joiners, 42% to nevers, 54%; Science Museums - joiners, 47% to leavers, 63%; Concerts and Musical Events - joiners, 56% to stayers, 73%.

   - Many eighth graders earn money (nevers and joiners, 69% to stayers, 75%).

   - Many do some reading not related to school (joiners and leavers, 80% to stayers, 85%), but few spent more than three hours on such reading (joiners, 20% to stayers, 31%). Most eighth graders watch television. The percentage watching three or more hours on weekdays ranged as follows: stayers, 36% to joiners, 48%.

8. **The parents of 4-H leavers and stayers were slightly more likely to be active in parent-teacher organization activities, to volunteer at school, and to have attended a school meeting than were other parents, but even the majority of this group were not involved. There was little difference in parents having rules and monitoring behavior.**

   - Parents of those who stayed in 4-H were slightly more likely to have volunteered at school (26%) and attended a school meeting (54%).

   - There was little difference between 4-H members and others in the extent to which parents had rules for them.

9. **There was little indication that taking part in 4-H had resulted in measurable differences when such indicators as better grades, better feelings about self, and more surety of future plans were examined.**

   - 4-H members other than the joiners were slightly (one or two percentage point difference) more likely to earn mostly A's in English, Science, and Social Studies and about as likely to earn A's in Math as were those who had never been in 4-H. In each case there were lower percentages of joiners indicated earning straight A's; however, about a fourth or more did do so.

   - Those youngsters who remained in 4-H into the eighth grade were about as likely to score in the lowest quartile on the test included with the NELS:88 study as were those who had never been in 4-H. The joiners were much more likely to be in the lowest quartile.

   - Over one in ten of those who remained in 4-H in the eighth grade had repeated a grade. This was a slightly lower percentage than that found for nevers.

   - 4-H members during or prior to the eighth grade were as likely to be in the lowest third in terms of self-concept as were those who had never been in 4-H. Youngsters who had never been in 4-H had a slightly higher percent in the highest self-concept third and slightly lower percent in the lowest third. Joiners showed the smallest percent in the highest third and a slightly higher percent in the lowest third.

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- o 4-Her's were slightly more likely to agree that at times they felt useless than were those who had never been in 4-H.

- o 4-Her's showed about as much variation on the locus of control index as did other youth.

- o 4-H members were slightly less likely to expect to complete college than were those who had never been in 4-H.

- o 4-H members were slightly more likely to expect to be in professional careers when they are thirty than were those who had never been in 4-H. There was little difference in the percentages of those expecting to be science or engineering professionals.

- o There were fairly substantial differences, however, in three areas. Those who were or had been in 4-H were more likely to be in a gifted or talented program, more likely to be active in school and nonschool activities, and more likely to take part in musical activities.

(Note: These findings do not contradict testimony of 4-H members and alumni as to how 4-H has benefited them. There is no information in this study about the extensiveness or intensity of the program the eighth grader experienced as 4-H. Some 4-Her's are very active. Others take part sporadically giving the program relatively little attention. Those who invest more and are more intensively involved in the program (including taking part for more years) are likely to gain more than those who take part in a token way for a few weeks. The findings also raise questions about the kind of impact that one can realistically expect any youth program to have on all participants given the very complex lives and multiple factors affecting children and teens today.)

9. **However, the same findings - that 4-H members are like average kids in the percent who get good or poor grades, have good or poor self-concept, smoke, are viewed by adults as having behavior problems, have special needs, hold positive or negative views of the value of the classes they are taking - is an important positive finding for 4-H in that it shows that 4-H is not selective. It does not achieve great results by selectively working with the "cream."**

Award winners, usually multi-year members, or very precocious youngsters, often are the most visible in 4-H. That sometimes gives a picture of 4-H as being a program for "super kids." It is reassuring, but also challenging for those working with 4-H, to know that 4-H attracts and holds youngsters with various kinds of problems.

10. **There is tremendous variation among 4-H members. Thus, those projecting images of 4-H to the outside public need to show that variation.**

The variation in the characteristics of members, especially that of family income which is likely to occur in most communities, makes the design of programs especially challenging. Low income youth must not be priced out of the program as seems to be occurring with nonschool sports.

The finding of extreme diversity also presents major challenges for those working with 4-H to design and carry out programs which will provide equal opportunities and meet the needs and interests of such a diverse group of young people. Ethnic diversity is usually visual; other kinds of diversity such as ability to earn grades in school and orientation toward school are much less visible.

More detail on the study and on these findings, and some implications are given in the pages that follow.

Companion Report

This report confines itself to looking at responses in terms of whether and when the youngster was in contact with 4-H. If you are interested in looking at responses of all the eighth graders in terms of characteristics such as ethnicty, socio-economic status, family type, urbanicity and region, you will want to study the companion report. In **Getting Acquainted with U. S. Eighth Graders: Implications for Nonschool Programs**, we identify general implications for youth, parenting, and community development programs. Some of the major findings from that report include:

- Eighth graders do not differ significantly in their beliefs and behaviors across the country. Very few differences of 10 or more percentage points appeared in relation to either urbanicity or region.

- There are relatively few differences between boys and girls.

- Ethnicity showed the greatest number of differences, followed by socio-economic status. In some instances, socio-economic status showed differences among ethnic groups. The differences related to ethnicity seemed either to stem from cultural differences or from the fact that differences in ethnic background are frequently very visible, while socio-economic differences are less so.

- Although youngsters living with both original parents often showed the "best" percentages, there was very little difference between those living with only one original parent and those living with one parent and a stepparent. Although parents in a two-parent family were somewhat more likely to be active in school affairs, almost as many single parents volunteered and attended school meetings.

- The families of eighth graders are mobile. Less than half were still in the school system where they started first grade. Some had changed schools four or more times.

- Most youngsters participate in something. There is not a large pool of uninvolved eighth graders. Athletic activity was the most frequent activity of this age group.

- Many youngsters have a poor orientation toward school--are bored, do not see the reason for attending some classes, or how classes will be useful in their future.

- Most eighth graders regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, and where they live have great expectations for their future.

INTRODUCTION

Data Source

The U. S. Department of Education began a longitudinal study of a group of youngsters who were in the eighth grade in 1988. The study surveyed more than 24,500 eighth graders, their parents and teachers from a carefully drawn sample of more than 1,000 public and private schools around the country. The sample excluded schools administrated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on reservations. 4-H was one of the nonschool activities included in one of the questions to both the eighth graders and the parents. As a result, we are able to get a picture of how youngsters who took part in 4-H sometime between 1981 and 1988 compare with other youngsters. The sample was so constructed that we could project the findings to all three million eighth graders.

Limitations

The findings in this report are quasi-firm rather than solid. Some youngsters or parents may have forgotten about present or prior 4-H participation. The survey did not get any indication of the extensiveness or intensiveness of the activity. Therefore, keep in mind that the 4-Her's included in this report are youngsters where either the eighth grader (participation during the eighth grade) or a parent indicated their child had participated (from the time the youngster was in the first grade) in some program they knew as 4-H. The program they were relating to was 4-H as it was known in their community during the 1980's.

The Extension NELS:88 Study

Purpose. The Extension NELS study, which began during the summer of 1991, is designed to communicate findings from the NELS data to Extension personnel and to identify implications for nonschool programs for younger teens, parenting programs, and programs for those interested in helping community institutions be more effective with younger teens.

Advisory Committee. George Mayeske of the Program Development and Management Extension Center, U.S.D.A. was instrumental in arranging for the use of the data and was the liaison to the project. The study is advised by a five-member committee which met in Washington, D. C. in August 1991 to launch the effort. The members included Karen Pittman, Academy for Educational Development; Sue Fisher, Florida Extension; Emma Lou Norland, Ohio State University; Al Beaton, Boston College; and Jeff Miller, Community Cares Project, National 4-H Council. The panel selected and prioritized topics they thought would be of most value. In addition, a panel of 60 Extension staff members and volunteers from 20 states reviewed materials and suggested implications.

Funding. Phase I of the Extension NELS study was funded under Cooperative Agreement No. 91-EXCA-2-0135 between the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wisconsin and the Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Phase II which began in 1993 is funded by the Kellogg Foundation through the Community Cares Project of the National 4-H Council and University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension. It will look at the findings from 10th graders. A team at Penn State, under the direction of Dr. Katherine Fennelly, also received funding from the National 4-H Council and developed a summary report which presents much of the information on the eighth graders in graph form.

Order of Activities

The first several months of the project were spent in examining single topics according to several variables recommended by the advisory committee: region, urbanicity, ethnicity, socio-economic status, family composition, sex of student, and 4-H participation; and paired variables: socio-economic status within ethnic groups, urbanicity within region, and family composition according to sex of student. We dropped the last two pairs of variables and continued to work with the first seven and the pair of ethnicity and socio-economic status.

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Those findings which appeared to have the most significance for youth programs were identified. We used percentages rather than statistical tests in that we were interested in the percent of youngsters with various characteristics rather than proving that significant differences exist. Futurists tell us that in the years ahead it is more important to understand and celebrate diversity than to seek uniformity.

Single Topic Reports. Eighty-nine single topic reports (2 to 8 pages) were developed which contained the responses for all 8th graders and responses according to the seven variables. These reports were mailed on a weekly or biweekly basis to more than 80 Extension personnel and volunteers from 21 states.

Summary Reports. Two summary reports were prepared working from the specific single topic reports. This report presents findings specific to 4-H participation. The other, **Getting Acquainted with U. S. Eighth Graders: Implications for Nonschool Programs**, presents information and implications for all eight graders and for eighth graders with selected characteristics. For that report a second layer of analysis was conducted to sort out from the many items those that might show the greatest amount of difference. That report will be of special interest to those interested in attracting new participants in Extension youth and parenting programs. That overall report provides information organized under the following headings.

Number of Comparisons Made by Category and Subcategory

CHARACTERISTICS	87	EIGHTH GRADERS	132
Demographics	28	Age and Special Needs	8
Households	24	Future Expectations	39
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	Views of Self	36
After School	16	Communication	48
Home Resources	11	Health Risk–Smoking	1
SCHOOL	93	LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	87
Opinions About School	26	School Courses	13
School Success	29	Nonschool Classes	9
School Risk Indicators	2	School Extracurricular	28
Orientation To Subjects	19	Nonschool Activities	11
School Behavior	17	General Participation	3
		Community Resources	7
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	40	Reading and Viewing	4
Parent Guidance	23	Work for Pay	12
Parent Participation	17		

Suggested Philosophy for Users of This Report

We realize that readers are looking for general statements about areas where differences do or do not exist. For simplicity, we have used such statements in this report. However, as we worked with the data, we soon found that simple statements of difference were often misleading because, regardless of the fact that differences existed between two groups, a fairly sizeable percentage of each group held the trait that we were examining. For example, it is a true statement that a higher percent of eighth grade girls than eighth grade boys had lower self-concepts scores. However, a fairly substantial percentage of boys had low self-concepts and a fairly substantial percentage of both boys and girls had high self-concepts. The diversity among boys and among girls may be more important than the fact that there was a gender difference. Therefore, as you look at data, do not just focus on the specific statement, but look at it in context.

Organization of the Report

This report is divided into the following sections:

1. Participation
2. Participation by those at risk
3. Continuing versus leaving 4-H
4. Views of self and the future
5. Communication and connectedness
6. Relationship with parents and rules
7. Parental involvement

Each section includes questions which one is likely to ask about 4-H. A summary response is given after the question followed by one or more implications. Then the specific findings supporting the answer to the question are given. Readers are encouraged to concentrate on the implications and to add others. Time spent reading this report is of little value unless you are able to use some of the findings. The most valuable use is that which helps Extension serve more early teens who hold diverse characteristics.

Section 1. PARTICIPATION

How many took part in 4-H?

Almost one in five, 17%, of 1988 eighth graders had taken part in 4-H at some time. Almost one in ten, 9%, said they were taking part in 4-H at the time of the survey.

Who took part in 4-H?

4-H participation was not limited to any one group. Youngsters with varied characteristics were attracted to 4-H. Some eighth graders of almost all ethnic backgrounds had taken part in 4-H regardless of whether they lived in the country or the city.

Implications: It was clear that 4-H had been attractive to youth of all backgrounds. Thus, those leading 4-H programs should not let erroneous preconceived beliefs that "those other kids wouldn't be interested" stand in their way of actively inviting all youth to take part in 4-H.

Specific Findings:

- 9% of urban (central city), 20% of suburban (those living in a Metropolitan Statistical Area but not in the central city), and 27% of rural eighth graders (those living outside a Metropolitan Statistical Area) had taken part in 4-H at some time. Among rural youth the range was from 16% of those in the Northeast Region to 34% of those in the South. Among urban youth the range was from 4% in the Northeast to 11% in the South and North Central divisions.

- 15% of the boys and 19% of the girls had taken part in 4-H at some time.

- There was relatively little difference in participation according to type of family. The range was from 15% of the eighth graders who lived with only their mother to 18% of those living with someone other than their natural parents or with their father and a stepmother.

- Black eighth graders, 20%, were most likely to have been 4-H members, and Hispanics, 7%, were least likely to have belonged to 4-H at some time in their lives (Asians, 8%; Whites, 18%; Native Americans, 18%). Among youth of Hispanic heritage, those of Puerto Rican background were most likely to have taken part in 4-H, 9%, and those of Cuban heritage were least likely to have done so, 3% (Mexican American/Chicano, 7%; Other Hispanic, 8%). Among the many Asian groups, those from the Pacific

Islands (Guam, Samoa, etc.) were most likely to have taken part, 17%, and those from Southeastern Asia (Vietnamese, Cambodian/Kampuchian, Thai, Laotian) were least likely to have been 4-H members, 5%. None of the small number of youngsters who were of West Asian background (Turkish, Iranian, Afghan) had been 4-H members.

- Eighth graders from the highest socio-economic status quartile families were least likely to have ever taken part in 4-H, 13%. Those from the lowest two quartiles, 18%, were most likely to have taken part. In most ethnic groups, as SES increased, the percentage having been 4-H members decreased. (Socio-economic status is a combination of family income, parents' educational level and parents' occupation.)

- When ten family income categories were examined, there was very little difference in the percentage of youngsters who had ever been in 4-H. The range was from 16% of those from five income categories (including below $5,000 and $50,000-99,999) to 21% of those from families with incomes over $100,000. The second highest percentage, 20%, was found in the category of $25,000 to $34,999. (The number of families with incomes of $100,000 or more was much smaller than that found in other categories which probably contributed to the higher percentage.)

- Youth whose parents held graduate degrees were less likely to have been a 4-H member, 11%, than were those whose parents had never completed school, 17%. The highest percent of participation came among youth whose parents had completed high school but not completed college, 18%.

- The range in percentage of 4-H members according to father's occupation was from 10% of those whose father held a technical position to 50% of those who were farmers. The range for mother's occupation was from 4% whose mother was in the military to 55% of those whose mother was a farmer. (Only 2% of the fathers of eighth graders gave their occupation as farmer. Less than 1% of the mothers gave farming as their occupation.)

How did participation in 4-H compare with that of similar nonschool organizations?

4-H, Scouts, and Boys or Girls Clubs showed fairly similar findings in terms of who was participating in the eighth grade.

Implications: It is possible that although the focus of the learning in each group is different, early teens may react somewhat similarly to clubs which emphasize the opportunity to learn. Rather than competition between similar national programs, there should be more cooperation in terms of sharing resources and devising programs to reach early teens who may view programs that they took part in as a 9-year-old as "babyish."

Specific Findings:

- Relatively few eighth graders took part in any one of the three programs. Among the three learning-oriented programs, the largest enrollment of eighth graders was found in Scouts, 14%. The lowest enrollment was found in 4-H, 9% Boys and Girls Clubs, 11%).

- Eighth graders were much more likely to be taking part in team sports, 37%, or religious groups, 34%, than in the three club programs.

- Participation in the three programs was not mutually exclusive. A fourth of the 4-H members said they were also in Scouts and 26% said they were also in Boys or Girls Clubs. Almost a fifth, 17%, of the Scouts said they were also in 4-H and 30% said they were also in a Boys or Girls Club. Over a third, 39%, of the participants in Boys or Girls Clubs said they were also in Scouts and 22% said they were also in 4-H.

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- When pairs were examined such as Scouts and 4-H and overlap subtracted, it was apparent that over three-fourths of eighth graders were not taking part in either program.

- 4-H participation dropped from 11% taking part sometime since first grade (according to parents) to 9% taking part in the eighth grade (according to the eighth grader). However, Scouts dropped from 38% having ever taken part in Scouts or Brownies to 14% still taking part in the eighth grade. Participation in Boys or Girls Clubs increased from 9% to 11%.

- Black and Native American eighth graders were more likely to belong to each of these three programs than were White youth. The range in percent participating in 4-H in the eighth grade was from 5% of the youth with Asian heritage to 14% of the Black eighth graders (Hispanic, 6%; White, 9%; Native American, 10%). The range for Scouts was from 11% of the Hispanic eighth graders to 20% of the Black eighth graders (Asian, 13%; White, 14%; Native American, 18%). The range in participation in Boys or Girls Clubs was from 8% of the White to 24% of the Black eighth graders (Asian, 9%; Hispanic, 13%; Native American, 17%).

- The percent of eighth graders participating in 4-H and Boys or Girls Clubs in the eighth grade decreased as socio-economic status quartile increased (4-H, 11% to 7%; Boys or Girls Clubs, 14% to 8%). There was a slight increase in participation in Scouts as socio-economic status increased (13% to 16%).

- Although there is a difference in participation in 4-H (5% central city to 15% rural) and Boys or Girls clubs (19% central city to 10% rural) related to the rural or urbaness of the area in which they live, members in both organizations came from all three urbanicity groups. Scout participation was fairly constant regardless of urbanism . The range was only from 14% in rural and suburban areas to 15% in urban central cities.

Did 4-Her's take part only in 4-H?

Most of the boys and girls who remained in 4-H, Scouts, or Boys or Girls Clubs into the eighth grade took part in other nonschool and school programs.

Implications: Those responsible for developing 4-H programs need to be very aware of what is available in other programs and the times of such programs to avoid duplicating programs and putting youngsters into situations where they must make tough choices.

Specific Findings:

- Most of the eighth graders took part in other community youth activities such as sports and religious groups in addition to the three programs examined in this report. Most 4-H members, 87%, took part in at least one of the other eight nonschool programs included in the NELS:88 survey. Over half took part in a total of four or more programs, at least three in addition to 4-H. Only 13% checked 4-H as the only program to which they belonged. The pattern was very similar for Scouts. Nine percent indicated they only belonged to Scouts; 6% said they only belonged to Boys or Girls Clubs.

- About half of the eighth graders who took part in one of the three programs also took part in at least one nonschool team sports program: 4-H, 46%; Scouts, 51%; and Boys or Girls Clubs, 45%. About half took part in a religious group: 4-H, 46%; Scouts, 50%; Boys or Girls Clubs, 45%. There was considerable overlap with other programs as well. About a third of those in one of the three programs featured in this report also took part in summer programs such as recreational programs (4-H, 33%; Scouts, 32%, Boys or Girls Clubs, 40%). The range in percentage also taking part in Y programs was from 32% of the Scouts and 4-H members to 37% of the Boys and Girls Club members.

- Most of the 4-H, Scouts, and Boys or Girls Club members took part in extracurricular activities at school. Less than one in ten indicated no school activity, 7% of 4-H members, 8% of Scouts, 7% of Boys or Girls Club members.

- Eighth graders who were taking part in one of the three programs were more likely to be taking part in several school activities than were those who were not taking part. About half took part in four or more school activities: 4-Her's, 53%; Scouts, 46%; Boys or Girls Club members, 54%. In comparison, about 34% of the eighth graders who were not in one of the three programs took part in four or more school extracurricular activities.

- Youth who took part in one of the three programs were somewhat more likely to take part in school sports than were those who did not take part. For example, 58% of the 4-H members were in varsity sports and 51% in intramural as compared with 47% and 41% of the eighth graders who were not in 4-H. The comparative figures for Scouts were 55% in varsity, 50% in intramural compared with 46% and 41%; Boys or Girls Clubs, 60% and 56% as compared with 46% and 41%.

- Following sports, the highest percent of participation was in science fairs. Over a third of the eighth graders who took part in one of the three nonschool programs also took part in a science fair at school. (In this and the rest of the statements in this section, the comparative percentage for youth who did not take part in the program is given in parentheses.) The percentages were as follows: 4-H, 36% (25%); Scouts, 37% (27%); Boys or Girls Clubs 37% (27%).

- Participants in the three nonschool programs also showed greater participation in music activities. The following percentages of eighth grade 4-H members took part in school music programs: band or orchestra, 36% (22%); chorus or choir, 33% (23%); dance, 34% (26%), cheerleading, 20% (10%). The percentages for Scouts were band or orchestra, 32% (21%); chorus or choir, 29% (23%) dance, 31% (28%), cheerleading, 13% (10%), and the percentages for Boys or Girls Clubs were band or orchestra, 30% (22%); chorus or choir, 33% (23%) dance, 36% (25%), cheerleading, 19% (10%).

- Fewer eighth graders participated in drama club or on a debate or speech team. However, those who took part in one of the three community programs were more likely to take part in these activities than were other eighth graders. The percentages for drama club were as follows: 4-H, 15% (8%); Scouts, 13% (8%); Boys or Girls Clubs, 18% (8%). The percentages taking part in a debate or on a speech team were 4-H, 13% (5%); Scouts, 10% (5%); Boys or Girls Clubs, 13% (5%).

- The percent of 4-H members working on a school newspaper was 20% (11%) and yearbook, 23% (14%). Similar percentages for Scouts were newspaper, 17% (11%); yearbook, 18% (14%); and for Boys or Girls Clubs were newspaper, 21% (10%); yearbook 25% (21%).

- A slightly higher percentage of the eighth graders in one of the nonschool programs was in a school leadership program than was found for those who were not in the nonschool program. The percentages for 4-H were honors society, 21% (13%) and student council, 20% (12%). Similar percentages for Scouts were honors society, 17% (13%) and student council, 17% (12%). The percentages for Boys or Girls clubs were honors society, 22% (12%) and student council, 21% (12%). However, as will be seen later, the differences are primarily due to joiners responses.

<u>How many stayed in 4-H into the 8th grade? How many joined in 4-H for the first time?</u>

Although more youngsters took part in 4-H before they became teens, some continued in 4-H as they moved into their teens and some joined 4-H for the first time.

Implications: Programs which expect to keep and attract teen age members need to consider what interests youth of this age, rather than simply extending programs which were effective with younger children.

Specific Findings:

- o 6% had started 4-H before the eighth grade and continued with 4-H while they were in the eighth grade. The parents said the youngster had been in 4-H at some time since the first grade; the youngster said they were in 4-H in the eighth grade. We called this group the "stayers."

- o More, 8%, had taken part before, but left 4-H by the time they were in the eighth grade. The parents said the youngster had been in 4-H sometime since the first grade, but the youngster did not indicate being in 4-H. We called this group the "leavers."

- o 4% joined 4-H for the first time in the eighth grade. The eighth graders said they were in 4-H but the parents did not say they had ever belonged to 4-H. We called this group the "joiners."

Note: These are quasi categories in that some responses may have been inaccurate. For example, some of the parents of the "joiners" may not have remembered that their youngster was in 4-H prior to the eighth grade. Information related to joiners is especially soft in that this category probably includes 1) a few who join traditional 4-H programs in the eighth grade, 2) those enrolled in nontraditional programs targeted at high-risk youth, and 3) those who either misread the questions (over half were in the lowest quartile on the reading test included in the study) or deliberately played games with the survey. The size of the later group cannot be proven. The percentage checking all of the nonschool and school activities was very small.

Section 2. PARTICIPATION BY THOSE AT RISK

Is there evidence of 4-H attracting youngsters who might be at risk?

4-H reaches youth at risk as well as other youth. 4-H members include a fairly substantial percentage of youngsters with several NELS family-based risk indicators. The joiner group tended to show a higher percentage of NELS risk indicators than did those who have been in 4-H before and those who had never been in 4-H.

Implications: If those who control 4-H are willing, it is possible to adapt the program to attract and serve youth who are less advantaged.

Specific findings:

- o The NELS:88 study included six indicators of risk - parent is single; income less than $15,000; neither parent has a high school diploma, sibling has dropped out of school, home alone more than three hours, and limited English proficiency. Sixty percent of the joiners showed at least one of these risk indicators compared to 45% of those who had never been in 4-H. A fairly substantial percentage of those who stayed in 4-H, 39%, and those who had left 4-H, 42%, showed at least one of the NELS risk factors.

- o 14% of those who stayed in 4-H were living in a single-parent family as compared with 18% of those who had never been in 4-H, 15% of the leavers, and 25% of the joiners. Seventy-one percent of the stayers lived with both natural or adoptive parents as compared with 68% of the leavers, 65% of those who had never been in 4-H and 54% of the joiners.

- o 20% of those who stayed in and those who left 4-H came from families with a total family income of less than $15,000 as compared with 19% of those who had never been in 4-H; joiners, 31%. At the other extreme, 24% of the stayers, leavers, and nevers and 25% of the joiners came from families with incomes of more than $50,000.

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- The parents of 7% of the 4-H members (leavers and stayers) had not completed high school as compared with 9% of the parents who had never been in 4-H and 18% of the parents of the joiners. At the other extreme, 11% of the parents of leavers and stayers had a graduate degree as compared with 13% of the parents of nevers and 9% of the parents of joiners.

- 13% of the leavers and stayers had a sibling who had dropped out of high school as compared with 16% of those who had never been in 4-H and 25% of the joiners.

- 12% of the leavers and stayers spent at least three hours home alone after school as compared with 13% of those who had never been in 4-H and 17% of the joiners.

- Although some 4-H members came from homes where their parents usually spoke a language other than English (leavers, 4%, stayers, 3%), the percentages were smaller than for the joiners (12%) or the nevers (11%).

Few eighth graders admit to smoking. 4-H members, with the exception of joiners, were almost as likely or unlikely to take the health risk of cigarette smoking as were nonmembers.

Implications: It is as important to discuss the effects of smoking with 4-H members as with any other group.

Specific Findings:

- 5% of those who remained in 4-H said they smoked at least one cigarette a day as compared with 8% of those who had never been in 4-H. Over one in ten of the joiners said they smoked at least one cigarette a day. (The joiners were more likely to be 15 or older. 52% of the joiners were born in 1973 or before as compared with 34% of the nevers and 36% of the stayers and leavers.)

Overall, 4-H members show the whole range of school orientations and behaviors that is found in the total population. Those who remained in 4-H were somewhat less likely to show several school risk indicators. However, over a fourth showed five or more of the indicators.

Implications: 4-H members are not automatically more oriented toward school or better behaved than are other eighth graders. Volunteers who work with 4-H programs can help youngsters develop more positive attitudes toward and better behavior in school.

Specific Findings:

- Our study team identified 15 indicators of being at risk at school in such a way that they might affect school success or encourage the youth to drop out of school. Two-thirds of those who stayed in 4-H showed at least one of the indicators as compared with 77% of those who were never in 4-H, 74% of those who had left 4-H before the eighth grade, and 74% of the joiners.

- 27% of those who stayed in 4-H showed at least five of the indicators as compared with 40% of those who had never been in 4-H, those who had left 4-H before the eighth grade, and the joiners.

- Four of the indicators in this analysis related to attitude.

  - 49% of those who remained in 4-H (the stayers) did not look forward to attending classes in at least two of the basic subjects - Math, Science, English, and Social Studies - as compared with 52% of those who had never been in 4-H (nevers), 53% of those who had left 4-H (leavers), and 42% of new joiners (joiners). The percent not looking forward to attending specific classes were as follows:
    Math: stayers, 40%; leavers, 45%; nevers, 45%; joiners, 41%.
    English: stayers, 43%; leavers, 44%; nevers 45%; joiners, 36%.
    Science: stayers, 35%; leavers, 38%; nevers, 40%; joiners, 35%.
    Social Studies: stayers, 41%; leavers, 44%; nevers, 41%; joiners, 35%.

- 38% of the stayers were afraid to ask questions in at least one class as compared with 36% of the nevers, 37% of the leavers and 48% of the joiners.
  Math: stayers, 20%; leavers, 22%; nevers, 20%; joiners, 32%.
  English: stayers, 16%; leavers, 15%; nevers 15%; joiners, 25%.
  Science: stayers, 14%; leavers, 14%; nevers, 14%; joiners, 26%.
  Social Studies: stayers, 14%; leavers, 14%; nevers, 14%; joiners, 23%.

- 25% of the stayers did not feel that at least two out of four basic classes would be useful in their future as compared with 31% of the nevers, 36% of the leavers, and 33% of the joiners.
  Math: stayers, 10%; leavers, 14%; nevers, 13%; joiners, 17%.
  English: stayers, 16%; leavers, 16%; nevers 16%; joiners, 20%.
  Science: stayers, 32%; leavers, 30%; nevers, 25%; joiners, 32%.
  Social Studies: stayers, 35%; leavers, 44%; nevers, 42%; joiners, 37%.

- 16% of the stayers said they were bored in school most of the time as compared with 23% of the nevers, 22% of the leavers, and 24% of the joiners.

o Six of the items indicated the extent to which eighth graders **invested time and effort in school.**

- 18% stayers and leavers often or usually came to class without their homework done as compared with 22% of the nevers and 28% of the joiners.

- 9% of the stayers indicated spending fewer than two hours on homework per week as compared with 10% of the nevers and leavers and 13% of the joiners. At the other extreme, 10% of the stayers spent 13 or more hours per week as compared with 9% of the nevers, and 11% of the leavers and joiners.

- 18% of the stayers and 19% of the nevers had missed more than three days of school in the previous four weeks as compared with 21% of the leavers and 24% of the joiners.

- 2% of the stayers had been late for school at least 5 out of 20 days as compared with 4% of the nevers, 3% of the leavers, and 6% of the joiners. On the other hand, 73% of the stayers had not been late for school any day in previous four weeks as compared with 68% of the leavers, 64% of the nevers, and 56% of the joiners.

- 15% of the stayers said they did no reading other than that required for school work, as compared with 20% of the leavers and joiners, and 21% of the nevers.

- 9% of the stayers, leavers, and nevers indicated grades of below C as compared with 15% of the joiners.

o Three items indicated **connectedness.**

- 53% of the stayers and nevers said they seldom or never talked to a counselor about more than two of eight topics as compared with 57% of the leavers and 41% of the joiners.
- 26% of the stayers said they seldom talked with teachers about more than two of eight topics as compared with 27% of the nevers, 28% of the leavers, and 18% of the joiners.
- 6% of the stayers did not participate in any school extracurricular activities as compared with 12% of the nevers, 9% of the leavers, and 8% of the joiners.

o Two items dealt with **actual behavior.**

- 27% of those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade had been sent to the office because of behavior as compared with 30% of the nevers, 26% of the leavers, and 46% of the joiners.
- 6% of the stayers had been sent to the office because of problems with school work as compared with 10% of the nevers, 7% of the leavers, and 17% of the joiners.

How did 4-Her's compare with others in terms of other indications of potential trouble with schoolwork?

4-H members are about as likely to be in trouble in school as those who are not 4-H members. Here as in the other sections in this report, the major finding is the extensive diversity found among 4-H members. There appears to be relatively little self-selection of the most ablest taking part in 4-H. 4-H attracts youngsters with a range of learning abilities.

Implications: A fairly sizeable percentage of 4-H members are likely to have difficulty with school courses. This may mean that they will have difficulty with those aspects of 4-H which require use of print materials and work consistent with their grade level in school. It also means that 4-H volunteers might use 4-H activities as a means of helping youngsters increase their ability to cope with the kinds of assignments required in school. Further, the activities might help to increase their self-esteem by having successes with activities which are less like those at school.

Specific Findings:

- 4-H members previous to the eighth grade were somewhat less likely to have had the school contacting their parents about their behavior. However, about a fourth of the parents who said their youngsters had been in 4-H at some time had been contacted about school behavior. The range was from 24% of the parents of leavers to 40% of the parents of joiners (nevers, 30%; stayers, 26%).

- 14% of the stayers had repeated a grade as compared with 17% of the nevers, 15% of the leavers, and 29% of the joiners.

- Those youngsters who remained in 4-H into the eighth grade were about as likely to score in the lowest quartile on the test included with the NELS:88 study as were those who had never been in 4-H. 21% of the stayers and 18% of the leavers placed in the lowest quartile on the overall score as compared with 20% of the nevers and 46% of the joiners. The percentages placing in the lowest quartile in each of the sections of the test were as follows:

  Math: stayers, 21%; leavers, 18%; nevers, 21%; joiners, 47%.
  Reading: stayers, 20%; leavers, 19%; nevers, 22%; joiners, 45%.
  Science: stayers, 20%; leavers, 19%; nevers, 22%;joiners, 42%
  Social Studies: stayers, 22%; leavers, 18%; nevers, 20%; joiners, 46%.

- Teachers rated 21% of the stayers as consistently inattentive in class as compared with 22% of the leavers, 25% of the nevers, and 36% of the joiners.

- Teachers rated 8% of the stayers and nevers as exceptionally passive and withdrawn as compared with 7% of the leavers and 9% of the joiners.

- Teachers rated 12% of the stayers and nevers as frequently disruptive as compared with 10% of the leavers and 20% of the joiners.

- 4-Her's families were about as mobile as other families - 10% of those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade had changed schools four or more times since first grade as compared with 11% of those who had never been in 4-H, 12% of the leavers and 16% of the joiners.

- 4-H members were as likely to have special problems as other eighth graders. Seventeen percent of the stayers, leavers, and nevers and 24% of the joiners had one or more of the following problems.

  - 10% of those who stayed in 4-H were said to have a learning problem as compared with 11% of the nevers, 12% of the leavers, and 16% of the joiners.
  - 3% of the stayers, leavers, and nevers were said to have an emotional problem; joiners 5%.

- 3% of the stayers and leavers, 2% of the nevers, and 4% of the joiners had hearing problems.
- 2% of all four groups had visual handicaps.
- 2% of stayers and nevers, 1% of leavers, and 3% of joiners were said to have speech problems.

o 4-H members were fairly similar to others in the beliefs they held about how teachers related to students.

- 37% of the stayers, nevers and joiners and 40% of the leavers felt that teachers did not give them sufficient praise when they worked hard.
- 22% of the stayers as compared with 20% of the nevers, 21% of the leavers, and 30% of the joiners felt put down in class by teachers.
- 32% of the stayers and nevers, 31% of the leavers, and 36% of the joiners felt that teachers did not really listen to what they had to say.
- 79% of stayers and leavers, 80% of nevers, and 73% of joiners felt the teaching was good at their school.
- 77% of the stayers, 76% of the nevers, 74% of the leavers, and 73% of the joiners felt that teachers were interested in students.
- 69% of the stayers, 67% of the nevers and joiners, and 71% of the leavers felt that students got along well with teachers at their school.

How did 4-H members compare as to success in school?

Members who had been in 4-H before the eighth grade showed the full range in terms of ability to excel as other students. They were slightly more likely to earn A grades and be in gifted and talented programs than were others. However, as indicated in the previous section, a sizeable percent also got below C grades and had repeated grades. There were only slight differences between those who had been in 4-H before the eighth grade (stayers and leavers) and those who had never been in 4-H in terms of placement on the NELS:88 administered test. However, fewer of the joiners placed in the top quartile, and almost half placed in the lowest quartile on such tests.

Implications: Within any 4-H program, youngsters will have varying levels of skill development and success in school. Volunteers need to be especially alert in helping those who have less-developed skill to be successful in 4-H activities and to learn skills which may help them improve their ability to deal with school and school tests.

Specific Findings:

o 4-H members - stayers, 18%; leavers, 21%; joiners, 29%; - were somewhat more likely to be in a gifted or talented program in the eighth grade than were those who had never been in 4-H, 10%.

o They were also slightly more likely to indicate that they earned straight A grades - stayers, 15%; leavers, 16% - as those who had never been in 4-H, 11%, or joiners, 7%.

o 4-H members other than the new joiners were slightly more likely to earn mostly A's in English, Science, and Social Studies and about as likely to earn A's in Math as were those who had never been in 4-H. Although in each case lower percentages of joiners indicated earning straight A's, about a fourth or more did do so. The percentages saying they mostly earned A grades were as follows:

- Math: stayers and leavers, 36%; nevers, 35%; joiners, 30%.
- English: stayers, 37%; leavers, 40%; nevers, 33%; joiners, 29%.
- Science: stayers, 36%; leavers, 35%; nevers, 30%; joiners, 24%.
- Social Studies: stayers, 38%; leavers, 37%; nevers, 32%; joiners, 24%.

- There was less difference between those who had been in 4-H before the 8th grade and those who had never been in 4-H in the scores on a test administered with the NELS:88 study. However, the joiners showed a good deal of difference from the other three groups. Twenty-seven percent of the stayers and 32% of the leavers placed in the top quartile in relation to total test score as compared with 28% of the nevers, and 10% of the joiners. The percentages placing in the upper quartile in each of the sections of the test were as follows:

  - Math: stayers, 22%; leavers, 30%; nevers, 20%; joiners, 13%.
  - Reading: stayers and nevers, 28%; leavers, 33%; joiners, 13%.
  - Science: stayers and nevers, 27%, leavers, 30%; joiners, 13%
  - Social Studies: stayers, 27%; leavers, 32%; nevers, 28%; joiners, 10%.

Section 3. CONTINUING VERSUS LEAVING 4-H

Those working with 4-H are challenged by the number of youth who stop taking part after a year or two. Various "reasons" have been given as to why some drop out and others continue. This section examines the accuracy of such reasons.

Were those who left busier with other organizations and activities?
In general those who stayed in 4-H were more likely to take part in other activities than were those who left 4-H or who had never taken part in 4-H.

Implications: Although it may be more difficult to arrange times for group meetings and activities, eighth graders who were active in other organizations and activities were as likely to stay in 4-H. The challenge for those organizing 4-H programs is that of finding a time for 4-H activities which is most harmonious with other activities. The fact that those who stayed in 4-H were more likely to take part in school clubs is interesting. It might be that some youngsters enjoy group activities which have a club structure more than others.

Specific Findings:

- Number of nonschool activities. Forty-four percent of those who stayed in 4-H and 62% of those who joined 4-H during the eighth grade took part in four or more nonschool activities as compared with 15% of the leavers and 16% of the nevers. Among those who had never been in 4-H, 24%, and among the leavers, 22% were not taking part in any nonschool programs.

- Number of school extracurricular activities. Six percent of those who stayed in 4-H did not take part in any school extracurricular activities as compared with 9% of the leavers, 12% of the nevers, and 8% of the joiners. The joiners, 57%, and stayers, 49%, were more likely to have taken part in four or more extracurricular activities than were those who never had been in 4-H, 34%, or those who left 4-H before the eighth grade, 36%.

- School clubs. Those who stayed in 4-H were more likely to take part in at least one school club than were those who left 4-H before the eighth grade, 50% as compared with 43%. However, those who joined in the eighth grade had the highest percentage taking part in a school club, 65%. Forty percent of those who never had belonged to 4-H belonged to a school club.

- The joiners showed higher percentage participation in each of the clubs than did 4-H members or those who had never been in 4-H. The stayers often had a slightly higher participation than did the leavers and nevers.

  - Science fairs: stayers, 32%; leavers, 28%; nevers, 27%; joiners, 42%.
  - History clubs: stayers, 3%; leavers, 2%; nevers, 2%; joiners, 20%.
  - Science clubs: stayers, 5%; leavers, 4%; nevers, 4%; joiners, 22%.
  - Math clubs: stayers, 7%; leavers, 4%; nevers, 5%; joiners, 21%.
  - Language clubs: stayers, 5%; leavers; 5%; nevers, 5%; joiners, 20%.

- Computer clubs: stayers, 8%; leavers, 5%; nevers, 6%; joiners, 28%.
- Vocational education clubs: stayers, 8%; leavers 4%; nevers, 3%; joiners, 23%.
- Other clubs: stayers, 8%; leavers, 5%; nevers, 6%; joiners, 28%.

o Communication Activities. Those who had been in 4-H and left before the eighth grade showed the smallest percent of participation in at least one communication activity (yearbook, newspaper, drama club, debate), 24%. Joiners showed the highest percent, 46%, followed by those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade, 30% (nevers, 26%).

- Yearbook: stayers, 16%; leavers, 12%; nevers, 14%; joiners 33%.
- Drama club: stayers, and nevers, 8%; leavers, 6%; joiners, 27%.
- Newspaper: stayers, 14%; leavers and nevers, 11%; joiners, 27%.
- Debate and speech: stayers, 7%; leavers, 3%; nevers, 5%; joiners, 19%.

o Music. The stayers, 64%, and the joiners, 63%, showed higher percentages taking part in at least one musical activity at school than did the leavers, 55%, or nevers, 52%. This pattern held fairly consistently for all three musical activities. The percentages were as follows:

- Band and orchestra: stayers 34%; leavers, 26%; nevers, 22%; joiners, 32%.
- Chorus/choir: stayers, 33%; leavers, 27%; nevers, 23%; joiners, 34%.
- Dance: stayers, 30%; leavers, 25%; nevers, 26%; joiners, 41%.

o Athletics. Those who stayed in 4-H were also more likely to take part in athletic activities. Stayers, 56%, and joiners, 61%, were more likely to take part in varsity sports than were leavers, 48%, or nevers, 47%. Leavers were least likely to take part in intramural sports, 39%, and joiners, 54% were most likely to do so (nevers, 42%; stayers, 47%). The range in relation to cheerleading was from 10% of those who had never been in 4-H to 25% of the joiners (leavers, 12%; stayers, 16%). Almost half, 46%, of the eighth graders who participated in 4-H (stayers and joiners) in the eighth grade also took part in nonschool team sports.

o Honor Activities. Although the joiners again showed a disproportionately high percentage, there is relatively little difference in participation in these two activities related to other 4-H participation groups. The percentages taking part in an academic honor society were stayers, 14%; leavers, 15%; nevers, 13%, joiners, 31%. The percentages taking part in a student council were stayers, 14%; leavers, 11%; nevers, 12%; joiners, 26%.

o Religious activities. Classes. Stayers, 54%, and leavers, 52%, were more likely to take religious classes than were joiners, 34%, or nevers, 44%. School religious organizations. 4-H members, either stayers, 22%, or leavers, 17%, were more likely to take part in school religious organizations than were those who had never belonged to 4-H, 14%. Joiners, 25%, were most likely to belong. Nonschool religious groups. Almost half, 47% of those who took part in 4-H in the eighth grade also took part in a nonschool religious group.

o Serving as an officer. Youngsters who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade were slightly more likely to be an officer in a school activity, 19%, than were those who left 4-H before the eighth grade, 13% (nevers, 14%; joiners, 30%). The difference was even greater for office holding in nonschool activities where the stayers indicated 32% holding an office and the leavers indicated 10% held an office (nevers, 9%; joiners, 34%).

Were those who left getting similar information through school classes?

Although some youngsters took courses in school which provide similar content to some 4-H projects, many youngsters did not take those courses.

Nonschool programs often focus on skills for living and multiple life roles including family, work, leisure, and community. For the most part, whether eighth graders were taking a specialized course in school did not seem to have any relationship with whether they currently were or had formerly been in 4-H. When enrollment in selected school courses was examined according to whether or not the eighth grader had taken part in 4-H, the largest number of differences appeared in relation to those youth who joined 4-H in the 8th grade. The percentage among the joiners who had had classes in consumer education, agriculture, computer, typing, drama/speech, art, and sex education was slightly higher than that for the leavers, stayers, or the nevers. In general, youth who had been in 4-H showed slightly higher percentages taking the various courses in the eighth grade than was found for those who had never been in 4-H. The largest difference appeared for music where the difference between those who were in 4-H in the eighth grade, 58%, and those who had never been in 4-H, 48%, was 10 percentage points.

Implications: Perhaps the most relevant finding is the relatively low percentage of eighth graders who had courses in various life skills areas. As schools face budget problems and pressures for youth to be more competent in basic subjects, it will be more important that other sources such as youth organizations provide youngsters with an opportunity to develop skills needed in relation to family, community, and leisure activities.

Specific Findings:

- Family-focused courses. Only a relatively small percentage of any of the groups had taken a course which focused on some aspect of family life. Stayers, 34%, and leavers, 33%, were slightly more likely to have taken a Home Economics class than were nevers, 31%, and joiners, 29%. Joiners, 12%, were slightly more likely to have taken a consumer education class than were stayers, 7%, or leavers and nevers, 6%.

- Shop or agriculture courses. All four groups were more likely to have taken a shop course than one in agriculture. Again, only somewhat over a third had taken either course. The percentages were as follows: shop courses - stayers, 29%; leavers, 30%; nevers, 31%; joiners, 33%; agriculture - stayers, 8%, leavers, 5%; nevers, 3%; joiners, 12%.

- Debate or speech courses. Stayers, 9%, and leavers, 8%, were about as likely to have taken a speech course. Nevers, 10% and joiners, 13%, were somewhat more likely to have taken this kind of course.

- Typing or computer courses. About the same percentage had taken a computer course as had taken a home economics or shop course. More had taken a typing course than had taken a consumer education or agriculture course. The percentages were as follows: computer course - stayers, 32%; leavers, 29%; nevers, 35%; joiners, 42%; typing course - stayers, 12%; leavers, 11%; nevers, 13%; joiners, 20%.

- Art and music courses. Similar percentages of stayers and leavers, 43%, had taken an art course, slightly less than nevers, 45%, and joiners, 48%. On the other hand, stayers, 58%, and leavers, 53%, were more apt to have taken music than were joiners, 46%, or nevers, 48%.

- Sex education. Stayers, 16%, and leavers, 15%, were about equally likely to have taken a sex education course and slightly less likely than joiners, 23%, and nevers, 18%.

Were the leavers taking more classes outside of school than were those who stayed in 4-H?

The stayers, eighth graders who continued in 4-H in the eighth grade, were most likely to be taking a nonschool class or lesson, 72%, and those who joined for the first time in the eighth

grade were least likely to be doing so, 52%. However, even at that more than half of those joining for the first time in the eighth grade were taking at least one nonschool class. Those who stayed in 4-H in the eighth grade, 72%, were slightly more likely to be taking a class or lessons outside of school than were those who dropped out of 4-H before the eighth grade, 69%.

In the instance of most of the specific classes, 4-H members (both those who left 4-H before the eighth grade and those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade) were slightly more likely to be taking a specific class or lesson than were those who had never joined 4-H. However, with the exception of religion, in which case slightly over half of the 4-H members were taking lessons, fewer than a third of the 4-H members were taking a specific kind of lesson. The highest percentage taking any specific lesson in the eighth grade was 33% (stayers) and 30% (leavers) taking music lessons.

Implications: Other than religious lessons, few eighth graders took lessons other than those offered through school. Other analysis showed that those in higher socio-economic status quartiles were more likely to be taking such classes than were those in the lower quartiles. Nonschool youth programs are in a position to give youngsters with special interests and talents experiences in areas where they may not be able to afford to take special classes.

Specific Findings:

- o Music and art lessons. A third of the youngsters who stayed in 4-H took a music lesson as compared with 30% of those who had left 4-H, 25% of those who had never been in 4-H, and 15% of the joiners. Stayers, 9%, and leavers, 8%, were also slightly more likely than nevers and joiners, 6%, to have taken art lessons.

- o Dance Lessons. Leavers, 20%, were more likely than stayers, 17%, joiners, 12%, and nevers, 16% to be taking dance lessons.

- o Computer Lessons. Leavers, 11%, and stayers, 10%, were about as likely as joiners, 9%, and nevers, 11%, to have taken computer lessons.

- o Language Lessons. Very few in any group, stayers and joiners, 2%; leavers, 4%, nevers, 3%, took language lessons outside of school.

- o Lessons About Their Own Culture. The percent taking classes about their own culture outside of school also was low: stayers, 3%; leavers, joiners and nevers, 4%.

- o Religious classes. Stayers, 54%, and leavers, 52%, were more likely to be taking a religious class than were nevers, 44% and joiners, 34%.

- o Other Classes or Lessons. Several in each group indicated taking something else as a class or individual lesson not connected with school. Gymnastics, karate, swimming, golf, crafts – a variety of areas probably are included in the "other" category. Stayers showed the highest percentage, 29%, then leavers, 23%, nevers, 21%, and joiners, 16%, taking other kinds of lessons.

Did they make more use of libraries, museums and other community resources?

Those who stayed and those who left 4-H were similar in the extent to which they used public libraries, art and history museums and attended concerts and musical events. The leavers were somewhat more likely to visit science museums. Joiners were less likely to be using most of the resources than were either those who had never been in 4-H or those who had participated in 4-H programs.

Implications: The NELS:88 survey did not investigate the frequency with which eighth graders use these various resources. However, it may be important for youth organizations to encourage youth to make use of the resources within their own and nearby communities.

Specific Findings:

- Public Library. There was very little difference among the three groups - stayers, 82%; leavers, 83%; and nevers, 82% - in relation to borrowing books from a public library. Fewer, three-fourths of the joiners, used public libraries.

- Art or History Museums. There was also little difference among these three groups in terms of visiting art museums - stayers, 36%; leavers, 39%; nevers, 40%; and visiting history museums (52%, 53%, 54%). Among the joiners, 47%, had visited art museums and 42% had visited history museums.

- Science Museums. Those who had been in 4-H and left were more likely to have visited Science museums, 63%, than were those who stayed in 4-H in the eighth grade, 50%, or those who never were in 4-H, 55%. Joiners, 47%, were more like the stayers in the percent who have visited Science museums.

- Concerts and Musical Events. Both the stayers and the leavers were somewhat more likely to attend concerts and other musical events than were those who had never been in 4-H, 71%, 73%, and 65%. Fewer joiners, 56%, attended concerts and musical events.

Did youngsters leave 4-H when they began to earn money?

Overall, those who stayed in 4-H were slightly more likely to work and more likely to work 10 or more hours than were those who left 4-H.

Implications: Adults developing nonschool youth programs may want to see how their programs can relate to work and earning money. Many early teens are interested in earning their own money. There are a variety of ways that nonschool programs can help them build skills or services which help them to that goal. With the general concern about the productivity and preparation of the American work force, those developing youth programs should be able to tie learning related to work and youngster's desire to earn money together in a meaningful program. In its earlier eras, 4-H did a good deal to prepare young people to be farmers. Today the challenge is one of helping them build attitudes toward work and general skills which will serve them well regardless of what kind of work they enter.

Specific findings:

- 75% of those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade were earning some money for pay as compared to 73% of those who left before the eighth grade. Both were more likely to be working than were those who had never been in 4-H or joiners, 69%.

- 18% of those who stayed in 4-H were working 10 or more hours per week as compared with 16% of the leavers (13% of those who had never been in 4-H., and 17% of the joiners).

- The greatest differences in kinds of work that appeared related to 4-H participation were in two categories: farm work and baby sitting or child care. The percentages in relation to farm work were as follows: those who stayed in 4-H, 15%; leavers, 7%; nevers and joiners, 4%. The percentages in relation to child care were leavers, 39%; stayers 36%; nevers, 34%; and joiners, 27%.

- There was little difference in other kinds of work between those who stayed in 4-H and those who left 4-H before the eighth grade. The percentages indicating other kinds of work were as follows:

  - stayers: lawn care, 11%; odd jobs, 5%; paper route, 3%; waiter/waitress, 2%; other manual work, 4%; store clerk/sales person, 1%; office work/clerical, 1%.

- leavers: lawn care, 14%; odd jobs, 5%; other manual work, 4%; news route, 3%; clerk/salesperson, 2%; waiter/waitress, 1%; office work/clerical, 1%.

Were those who left 4-H more likely to watch television or read?

Eighth graders who stayed in 4-H were slightly more likely to read on their own and were as apt to watch television as those who left 4-H before the eighth grade.

Implications: Those developing nonschool programs may want to encourage youth to do more recreational reading. They also should be aware that the majority of eighth graders watch television and should consider whether more of the project material should be available on video tape instead of or in addition to print materials.

Specific Findings:

o Those who stayed in 4-H were somewhat more likely to do at least some reading not related to school. However, in general they showed the same pattern as other eighth graders with a fairly high percentage indicating no reading and a fairly high percentage indicating spending three or more hours per week on reading not related to school.

--No reading: stayers, 15%; leavers, 20; nevers, 21%; joiners, 20%.
--Three or more hours per week: stayers, 31%; leavers and nevers, 27%; joiners, 20%.

o 4-H members showed little difference from others in terms of the extent to which they watched television on weekdays. The percentages indicating they watched less than one hour were as follows: stayers, nevers, and leavers, 11%, joiners, 18%. The percentages watching three or more hours were stayers, 38%; nevers and leavers, 43%; joiners, 48%.

Did the demographics of stayers and leavers differ?

There did not appear to be a great deal of difference between leavers and stayers when selected demographic variables were examined.

Implications: These findings support the conclusion that 4-H has some degree of attraction for youth with widely different characteristics and is not a program chosen by a few.

Specific Findings:

o Ethnicity. One percent more left than stayed in each ethnic group except Hispanic where the same percent stayed as left (Asian, 3% and 2%; Hispanic, 1% and 1%; Native American, 7% and 6%; Black, 7% and 6%; White, 8% and 7%). There did not appear to be any special patterns of leaving and staying observable according to heritage.

Blacks, 8%, were most likely, and Whites, 2%, were least likely to have started 4-H in the eighth grade. The percentages for the other major ethnic groups were as follows: Asian, 3%; Hispanic, 4%; Native American, 4%. The range among Hispanic groups in terms of the percent starting 4-H in the eighth grade was from 3% of those with Cuban heritage to 6% of those with Puerto Rican backgrounds. The range among Asian groups was from 0% of West Asians, and 1% of four other groups to 13% of those of Pacific Island heritage.

o Socio-economic Status (SES). The percent of leavers was slightly higher in all SES groups. In most instances there was only a 1% difference. Lowest SES, leavers 7%, stayers, 6%; moderately low, 8% and 7%; moderately high, 8% and 7%; highest quartile, 7% and 5%. When the three components of SES were examined separately, in most instances one or two percent more in each category left than stayed. Farm youngsters were more likely to stay in 4-H through the eighth grade. Among those whose fathers were farmers, 13% left; 35% stayed. Very slight differences appeared in relation to other occupations.

- Ethnicity and Socio-economic Status. When ethnicity was examined in combination with socio-economic status no dramatic differences emerged. With a few exceptions, a higher percentage of youth left 4-H before the eighth grade than stayed into the eighth grade regardless of ethnicity and SES. Within ethnic groups, there was a pattern of the percent from the lowest SES who joined 4-H for the first time in the eighth grade to be slightly higher than from other SES quartiles. Blacks and Native Americans showed slightly higher percentages than did other ethnic groups. The range was from 1% of the third SES quartile Hispanics to 9% of the low SES quartile Blacks who were joiners. Joiners' parents seemed to come from diverse occupational groups.

- Urbanicity. In all three residence groups the percent leaving 4-H before the eighth grade was somewhat higher than the percent staying: rural, 12% left and 11% stayed; suburban, 6% left and 4% stayed; urban, 4% left and 2% stayed. The percent of joiners, 4%, was the same for rural and urban eighth graders, but was only 1% among suburban eighth graders. When region and ethnicity were combined, eighth graders from the rural south showed the highest percentage of new joiners. The lowest percent, 2%, was found for Northeast suburban and North Central rural and suburban.

- Sex of Student. Among the boys, 6% had left 4-H before they reached the eighth grade and 5% remained in 4-H. Among the girls, 9% had left, and 7% remained in 4-H. Four percent of the boys and 3% of the girls joined 4-H for the first time in the eighth grade.

- Family Composition. In most instances, more youth had left 4-H by the time they were in eighth grade than remained in 4-H. The exception came in relation to youth living with their fathers (5% left, 6% stayed) and youth living with someone other than a natural parent (6% left, 6% stayed). The percentages for the other family types were as follows: both natural parents, 8% left and 7% stayed; mother and stepfather, 7% and 5%; father and stepmother, 8% and 5%; single mother, 6% and 4%. Youngsters living with both their natural parents were least likely to have joined 4-H in the eighth grade, 3%. The highest percent, 5%, appeared for youth living with their fathers and stepmothers, those living only with their mothers, and those living with someone other than a natural parents.

- Region. Differences were slight across regions. The greatest difference in the percentage staying and leaving appeared in the South (11% left, 8% stayed). The West showed slightly more had stayed in 4-H into eighth grade, 4%, than had left before the eighth grade, 2% (North Central, 8% left, 8% stayed; Northeast, 4% left, 3% stayed). The range in percent of NELS:88 eighth grade joiners ranged from 2% of those in the Northeast and North Central to 3% of the eighth graders in the West and 4% of those from South.

- Religious background. With the exception that no Moslems eighth graders had taken part in 4-H, some youngsters from each of the other religions had taken part in 4-H. Those who had taken part in 4-H were slightly more likely to be Baptist and slightly less likely to be Catholic than those who never joined 4-H. The percentages for those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade were as follows: 29% Baptist, 17% Catholic, 12% Methodist, 12% Lutheran, 9% other Protestant, 9% other Christian, 4% Presbyterian, 3% other non-Christian, 2% Episcopalian, 0% Moslem or Hindu, 2% no religion, less than one percent for each of the other religions listed. The percentages for those who left 4-H before the eighth grade were as follows: 33% Baptist, 21% Catholic, 11% Methodist, 10% other Christian, 8% other Protestant, 6% Lutheran, 4% Presbyterian, 4% other non-Christian, 1% Episcopalian, 0% Moslem,

2% no religion, less than one percent for each of the other religions listed. The religions of those who joined 4-H in the eighth grade were as follows: 31% Baptists; 26% Catholics; 10% Methodists; 10% other Christian; 6% other Protestant; 4% Lutheran; 3% Presbyterian; 1% Episcopalian; 1% Jewish; 0% Hindu and Moslem; 5% other; 2% no religion, less than one percent for each of the other religions listed. The affiliations for those never in 4-H were as follows: 33% Catholic, 21% Baptist, 9% Methodist, 7% Lutheran, 7% other Christian, 7% other Protestant, 4% Presbyterian, 4% other non-Christian, 2% Episcopalian, 2% Jewish, 2%, 3% no religion, less than one percent for each of the other religions listed.

After all this, what can we say about factors determining who stayed and who left 4-H?

Leaving 4-H before the eighth grade or remaining in 4-H into the eighth grade was not clearly associated either with demographic characteristics, or, as seen in previous sections, with most alternative uses of time and/or ways of securing help with life skills. Any one of these factors might have made a difference with some of the youngsters who left, but not with some of those that stayed so that they cancelled each other out and did not show major differences. Or there may be a completely different factor involved. There is some indication in the data that some youngsters may be more learning-oriented than others - more interested in participating in clubs, or taking extra classes. It is likely that some of the youngsters who remain in a youth program like 4-H after many of the peers have dropped out, do so because they see it as an opportunity to learn. Most younger teens are more interested in social and leisure activities which place little or no emphasis on content learning.

Implications: If Extension or other youth-serving agencies want to reach more of the younger teens, they should consider continuing offering instructional programs for those young people who are attracted to such programs. However, they should also mount programs which appear on the surface to be highly active and social, but have built into them the kinds of experiences which help early teens learn about themselves and help them build life skills within social situations.

Section 4. VIEWS OF SELF AND THE FUTURE

Were 4-H members more likely to have positive feelings than those who had not been in 4-H?

4-H members were very like other youth in terms of the range in their strength of self-concept. Some 4-Her's, like other eighth graders, at times felt "no good", "useless", or "that they could not get ahead."

Implications: Most of the awards go to a small percentage of 4-H members. Those winning awards usually show both outstanding work and confidence and positive self-concept. However, the image created by award winners may be misleading in that some 4-H members have very poor self-concepts and need to be encouraged by the adult working with 4-H. Some award programs may actually decrease self-esteem. Award programs need to be carefully thought through in relation to the harm or benefit to young people. Often they arise because a sponsor wants to give an award or because awards are a way of getting publicity for a program.

Specific Findings:

- Among those who stayed in 4-H, one third fell into each of the self-concept tertiles. The range in percent in the lowest tertile was from 33% of the nevers and stayers to 39% of the joiners. The range in percent in the upper tertile was from 30% of the joiners to 34% of the nevers.

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- Stayers, 33%, and leavers, 32% were slightly less likely to **strongly agree** that they felt good about themselves than were those who had never been in 4-H, 35%. Joiners, 43%, were most likely to strongly agree. The range in percent **disagreeing** was from 8% of the nevers and stayers to 10% of the joiners. (The difference may be due to the fact that there are more girls in 4-H than in the "never" group. Our overall analysis found a higher percent of girls than boys had lower self-concept scores and were less likely to feel good about themselves.)

- The same percent, 41%, in all four groups **strongly agreed** they were equal in worth to others. The range in percent **disagreeing** was from 7% of the stayers to 10% of the joiners (8%, nevers and leavers).

- Stayers and joiners, 39%, and leavers, 37%, were slightly less likely to **strongly agree** that they could do as well as others than did nevers, 40%. The range in percent **disagreeing** was from 6% of the stayers to 12% of the joiners (nevers, 8%; leavers, 8%).

- The range in percent **strongly agreeing** that they were satisfied with themselves was from 32% of the leavers to 36% of the joiners (nevers, 34%; stayers, 35%). The range in percent **disagreeing** was from 12% of the joiners and nevers to 14% of the leavers (stayers, 13%).

- 4-Her's (stayers, 53%; leavers, 52%; joiners, 57%) were slightly more likely to **agree** that at times they felt useless than were those who had never been in 4-H, 51%.

- 4-Her's (stayers, 44%; leavers, 43%; joiners, 48%) were also slightly more likely to **agree** that they sometimes felt no good at all than did those who had never been in 4-H, 41%.

- 4-Her's (stayers, 11%; leavers, 13%) other than the joiners, 22%, were less likely to **agree** they had nothing of which to be proud than were those who had never been in 4-H, 14%.

Did 4-Her's differ from others in their perceptions of their peers' views?

Members of 4-H differed only slightly in their perception of how others viewed them on popularity, importance and athletic ability. Regarding mischievousness, those who recently joined were most likely to feel others considered them as troublemakers.

Implications: In general, most 4-H members and nonmembers feel that they are seen positively by others. However, it may be that some of the joiners are searching for a place where they will be accepted. Adults should be especially alert to the needs of youngsters who join a program for the first time when they are older.

Specific Findings:

- Popular. 4-Her's (stayers and leavers, 18%; joiners, 21%) were slightly more likely to think others viewed them as very popular than were those who had never been in 4-H, 16%. The range in the percent saying they were seen as not very popular was from 16% of the joiners to 18% of the nevers (17%, leavers and stayers).

- Athletic. The 4-Her's (stayers, 27%; leavers, 24%; joiners, 34%) differed slightly in comparison to nevers, 26%, in the percent thinking others saw them as very athletic. The range in percentage perceiving they were viewed as not at all athletic was from stayers, 6%, to joiners, 11% (leavers, 7%; nevers, 8%).

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- Important. The 4-Her's only differed slightly (stayers, 21%; leavers, 20%, joiners, 26%) in comparison to the percent of nevers, 20%, thinking others saw them as very important. The range in percent feeling they were seen by peers as not at all important was from 12% of the leavers to 15% of the joiners (stayers, 13%; nevers, 14%).

- Troublemaker. Although stayers, 3%, and leavers, 4%, were slightly less likely, joiners were more likely, 10%, to think that others viewed them as very much of a trouble maker. The ranges in terms of not at all were as follows: joiners, 68% to stayers, 78% (nevers, 72%; leavers, 77%).

Did the future look different to 4-H members than it did to others?

In general, youngsters who had been 4-H members (either leaving before eighth grade, continuing when in the eighth grade, or joining for the first time in the eighth grade) did not differ much from those who had never taken part in terms of their future expectations related to further education, high school program and occupation. Most eighth graders expected to continue their education past high school.

Implications: Those working with 4-H need to help youth hold to and capitalize on the expectations they have in the eighth grade and help them achieve those expectations. In particular, 4-H volunteers need to help youngsters to develop the skills and knowledge which will help them prepare for service, technical, and professional careers.

Specific Findings:

- One percent of each of the three groups, stayers, leavers and nevers, did not expect to complete high school as compared with 6% of the joiners.

- The percentages expecting to complete college were as follows: nevers, 70%; leavers, 69%; stayers, 68%; joiners, 56%.

- The percentages expecting to take college preparatory courses were 30% of the students who had never been in 4-H and 33% of both the leavers and the stayers; joiners, 28%.

- The percentages choosing vocational majors were as follows: nevers and leavers, 17%; stayers, 19%; joiners, 18%.

- 4-H members were slightly more likely to expect to be in professional careers when they are thirty (nevers, 29%; leavers, 31%; stayers, 32%). There was little difference in the percentages expecting to be science or engineering professionals (6% never and leavers, and 5% stayers).

- Five percent of those who stayed in 4-H until the 8th grade expected to be farmers as compared with 2% of those who left and 1% of those who had never been in 4-H.

- Three percent of the 4-H members (either stayers or leavers) expected to be a full time homemaker when they were thirty as compared with 2% of those who had never been in 4-H. (girls, 4%; boys, 0%).

Did 4-Her's differ from others in the extent to which they felt they could control their lives?

4-Her's showed about as much variation on the locus of control index as did other youth. The range in percent in the lowest tertile (thought to be outer directed) of the locus of control index was from 30% of the leavers and stayers to 43% of the joiners (nevers, 31%). The range in percent in the upper tertile (thought to be inner directed) was from 27% of the joiners to 37% of the stayers and joiners (leavers, 35%).

Implications: The early teen years are a difficult time for many youngsters. It is a challenge to adults to help youngsters take responsibility for those things which they can control, and help them understand and deal with those things which they cannot.

Specific Findings:

- o Good luck. The range in percent **agreeing** (agree or strongly agree) with the statement that good luck was more important than hard work was from 9% of the leavers and stayers to 22% of joiners (nevers, 11%). The range in **strongly disagreeing** was from 34% of joiners to 47% of stayers (nevers, 42%; leavers 45%).

- o Chance and luck. The range in **agreeing** with the statement that chance and luck were very important in their lives was from 34% of leavers to 53% of joiners (stayers, 36%; nevers, 37%). The range in **strong disagreement** was from 20% of joiners to 22% of leavers and stayers (nevers, 21%).

- o Control over life. The range in **agreeing** with the statement about not having much control over their lives was from 17% of stayers to 29% of those who joined 4-H during the eighth grade (nevers, 19%; leavers, 20%). The range in **strong disagreement** was from 28% of joiners to 34% of leavers and stayers (33% of nevers).

- o Something stops me. The range of **agreeing** with the statement about something stopping me from getting ahead was from 27% of nevers and leavers to 37% of joiners (stayers, 28%). The range in **strong disagreement** was from 15% of joiners to 17% of nevers (leavers and stayers, 16%).

- o Plans hardly ever work. The range in **agreeing** with the statement that their plans hardly ever worked out was from 18% of stayers to 27% of joiners (nevers, 19%; leavers 20%). The range in **strong disagreement** was from 23% of joiners to 34% of stayers (leavers, 27%; nevers, 28%).

- o Making plans work. There very little difference in **disagreeing** with the statement that when they make plans they can make them work out (joiners, 20%; nevers, leavers, stayers, 21%). Joiners, 27%, were somewhat more likely to **strongly agree** than were leavers (19%), nevers and stayers (20%).

Section 5. COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTEDNESS

Were 4-H members more likely to talk to adults than other eighth graders?

Communication and connectedness are supposed to be important ways of keeping early teens from drifting into trouble. The NELS:88 study gave considerable attention to the extent to which eighth graders talked to their parents, school officials, and other adults about school and other things. There did not seem to be a clear pattern of difference between 4-H members and others. However, it was very clear that many teenagers were more likely to talk to an adult friend or relative than they were to school personnel.

Implications: It is important that adults working with 4-H and other nonschool programs targeted to teens be good listeners and help youth to explore things important to them without swamping them with advice or appearing judgmental.

Specific Findings:

The parents were asked how frequently they had discussed school plans with their eighth grader.

- o School Experiences. Parents of 4-H leavers, 82%, and stayers, 83%, were slightly more likely to discuss school experiences with their eighth graders than were those of nevers, 79% or the joiners, 74%.

- High School Plans. However, parents of eighth graders who had never been in 4-H were more likely to say that they regularly discussed high school plans, 48%, than did parents of leavers, 44%, or stayers, 44% (joiners, 50%).

- Plans After High School. Parents of stayers were slightly less likely to regularly discuss plans for after high school, 35%, as compared for 38% of the other three groups.

The eighth grader was asked specific questions about how frequently he or she had discussed high school plans with various people.

- The ranges in discussing high school plans were Did Not Discuss High School Plans at All with Mother: 8% stayers to 13% joiners (nevers, 11%; leavers, 10%); Father: 25% nevers, leavers, stayers, to 30% joiners; Guidance Counselor: 59% joiners to 66% leavers (nevers and stayers, 64%); Teachers: 47% joiners to 55% nevers (stayers, 48%, leavers, 53%); Adult Relatives or Friends: 28% joiners to 36% nevers and leavers (32% stayers); Peers: 11% leavers and stayers to 16% joiners (13% nevers).

- The ranges in discussing high school plans three or more times with Mother: 49% joiners to 55% leavers (nevers, 52%; stayers, 54%); Father: 30% joiners to 32% leavers (nevers and stayers, 31%); Guidance Counselor: 6% nevers and leavers to 10% joiners (stayers, 7%); Teachers: 7% nevers to 12% joiners (leavers, 8%; stayers, 9%); Adult Relatives or Friends: 20% stayers to 27% joiners (nevers and leavers, 21%); Peers: 44% nevers to 47% leavers (stayers, 45%; joiners, 46%;).

The eighth graders were also asked how frequently they discussed each of eight topics with teachers, counselors, or adults other than their parents.

- Jobs and Careers. 4-H members other than new joiners were about as likely to seek out information from these three sources as were those who had never been in 4-H. The range in talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about jobs and careers was from 60% of leavers to 72% of joiners (nevers, 62%; stayers, 61%). The range in terms of talking with a counselor was from 17% of the leavers to 30% of the joiners (nevers, 19%; stayers, 22%). The range in talking with a teacher was from 23% of the leavers and nevers to 33% of the joiners (stayers, 27%).

- High School Program. The range in talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about high school programs was from 52% of leavers to 57% of joiners (nevers, 53%; stayers, 56%). The range in terms of talking with a counselor was from 34% of the leavers to 43% of the joiners (nevers and stayers, 37%). The range in talking with a teacher was from 39% of the leavers to 46% of the joiners (nevers, 41%; stayers, 45%).

- Improving School Work. The range in talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about current school work was from 48% of nevers and stayers to 55% of joiners (leavers, 49%). The range in terms of talking with a counselor was from 18% of the leavers to 32% of the joiners (nevers and stayers, 21%). The range in talking with a teacher was from 58% of the leavers and stayers to 65% of the joiners (nevers, 61%).

- Selecting Courses. The range in talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about current school work was from 56% of leavers to 58% of joiners and stayers (nevers, 57%). The range in terms of talking with a counselor was from 18% of the leavers to 32% of the joiners (nevers and stayers, 21%). The range in talking with a teacher was from 58% of the leavers and stayers to 65% of the joiners (nevers, 61%).

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- Studies. The percentages indicating talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about things studied in school were 62% for nevers, leavers, and joiners, and 63% for stayers. The range in talking to a counselor was from 10% of the nevers and leavers to 21% of the joiners (stayers, 12%). The range in talking to a teacher was from 65% of the nevers to 69% of the joiners (leavers and stayers, 68%).

- Discipline Problems. The range in talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about discipline problems was from 25% of the leavers and stayers to 42% of the joiners (nevers, 29%). The range in talking to a counselor was from 11% of the stayers to 26% of the joiners (leavers, 12%; nevers, 14%). The range in talking to a teacher was from 11% of the stayers to 26% of the joiners (leavers, 12%; nevers, 14%).

- Alcohol and Drug Abuse. The range in talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about alcohol or drug abuse was from 16% of the nevers and stayers to 30% of the joiners (leavers, 17%). The range in talking to a counselor was from 8% of the leavers to 20% of the joiners (nevers and stayers, 9%). The range in talking to a teacher was from 10% of the leavers to 22% of the joiners (nevers, 11%; stayers, 12%).

- Personal Problems. The range in talking with an adult other than a parent, teacher or counselor about personal problems was from 35% of the nevers to 45% of the joiners (leavers and stayers, 37%). The range in talking to a counselor was from 17% of the leavers to 26% of the joiners (nevers and stayers, 18%). The range in talking to a teacher was from 10% of the nevers and leavers to 17% of the joiners (stayers, 13%).

- The joiners showed somewhat higher percentages talking about more topics than did other groups. The ranges were as follows. Counselor: 1-2, joiners, 41% to leavers, 57%, (stayers and nevers, 53%); 7-8, leavers 4%, to joiners, 16% (stayers and nevers 6%); Teacher: None, joiners, 9%, to leavers, 14% (stayers, 11%; nevers, 13%); 7-8, joiners, 19%, to 9% for the other three groups; Other Adult: 1-2, stayers and joiners, 9% to nevers, 11% (leavers, 10%); 7-8, stayers, 27%, to joiners, 40%, (leavers and nevers, 28%).

Section 6. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND RULES

Did 4-H members see relationships with their parents differently?

The joiners were the most likely to show difficulties in some relationships with their parents. Other 4-H members did not differ markedly from those who had never been in 4-H in terms of how they saw their relationship with their parents as indicated by three questions.

Implications: Often adults working with youth are like parents. It is important that youth feel that adult advisors trust them. It is important that sufficient explanation is given that all youth understand the reasons behind the decision or directive if an adult has to interject a decision or directive.

Adults working with youth programs may find some younger teens too dependent on their parents when problems arise. Youth leaders can help youth who are not used to dealing with their own problems to take more responsibility through helping them think through both the problem and the alternatives for dealing with the problem.

Specific Findings:

- My parents trust me to do what they expect without checking on me. Joiners, 77%, to stayers, 81% (nevers, 79%; leavers, 80%).

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- I often do not understand WHY I am supposed to do what my parents tell me to do. Stayers, 25%, to joiners, 35% (leavers, 27%; nevers, 29%);

- I often count on my parents to solve many of my problems for me. Nevers, 21%, to joiners, 28% (leavers and stayers, 22%).

Were parents of 4-H members more or less likely to have rules for eighth graders than other parents?

Although there was some difference in relation to the four areas for rules included in the survey, in general there was little difference between the extent to which parents of 4-H members and other parents set rules.

Implications: Experts on youth-at-risk emphasize the importance of parents effectively monitoring behavior of early teens. For the most part, parents believe that they have rules. However, they may not be careful to apply those rules consistently and considerately.

Specific Findings:

- Rules about television viewing. Parents of youngsters who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade were slightly more likely to say they made rules about television watching than were other parents. Early or Late. The range was from 82% of the parents of joiners to 87% of the parents of stayers (nevers, 84%; leavers, 85%) Which Programs. The range was from 68% of the nevers and joiners to 73% of the stayers (leavers, 71%). Hours on School Days. The range was from 58% of the leavers to 63% of the stayers (nevers, 60%; joiners, 62%). Total Hours. The range in rules related to total number of hours of watching was from 35% of leavers to 43% of stayers and joiners (nevers, 41%).

- There was little relationship between parents having rules about homework, household chores, and grades, and eighth graders participating in 4-H. Homework. The range in percent of parents indicating that the family had rules about homework was from 91% of the parents of the leavers to 93% of the parents of joiners (nevers and stayers, 92%). Household Chores. The range in percent of parents indicating there were rules about doing household chores was from 89% of the nevers to 92% of the parents of joiners (leavers, 90%; stayers, 91%). Grades. The range in relation to rules about grades was from 70% of parents of stayers to 72% of the other three groups of parents.

Section 7. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Were parents of 4-H members more likely to take part in school related activities than other parents?

The parents of 4-H leavers and stayers were slightly more likely to be active in parent-teacher organization activities, to volunteer at school, and to have attended a school meeting, but even the majority of this group was not involved.

Implications: Why don't parents take part in school related activities? The easy answer is lack of time. However, to what extent do parents use time as an excuse because they do not know what to expect and do not feel comfortable in such activities? Can those working with nonschool programs help less confident or less interested parents gain more interest and ease in attending activities focused on youth? Through special projects involving both youth and parents, can youth programs encourage more adults to attend school meetings and take a more active role in school decisions?

Specific Findings:

- PTO. The range in belonging to PTO was from 25% of the parents of joiners to 32% of the parents of nevers. There was very little difference in attendance - 34% of parents of those who left 4-H before the eighth grade to 36% of the parents of the stayers, joiners and nevers. The range in taking part in PTO activities was from 23% of the joiners' parents to 30% of the parents of those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade (nevers, 25%; leavers, 28%).

- Volunteered to help at school. The range in volunteering was from 14% of the joiners' parents to 26% of the parents of stayers (nevers, 19%; leavers, 20%).

- Attended a school event. The range was from 58% of the joiners' parents to 75% of parents of those who stayed in 4-H into the eighth grade (nevers, 62%; leavers, 67%).

- Phoned or spoke to a teacher or counselor. 56% of leavers' parents to 62% of joiners' parents (stayers, 57%; nevers, 59%).

- Attended a school meeting. 48% of the leavers' parents to 54% of the parents of stayers (nevers, 49%; joiners, 50%).

- Attended their eighth grader's class. 24% of the leavers' parents to 34% of the parents of joiners (nevers, 28%; stayers, 29%).

- Contacting the School. There was no consistent pattern related to 4-H participation. However, it appeared that a slightly higher percent of the parents of stayers were willing to help at school than was the case of the other groups. If, and there is no information to support this, information volunteered to the school was involved in a child moving to a new school district, it is possible that the leavers were more likely to have moved just prior to the eighth grade than were the stayers which might also account for their no longer being in 4-H.

  The ranges were as follows. Information for Records: 39% of the parents of stayers to 44% of the parents of leavers (nevers, 40%; joiners, 42%). Fund Raising: 20% of the parents of nevers and joiners to 26% of the parents of stayers (leavers, 22%). Volunteering: 15% of the parents of joiners to 25% of the parents of stayers (nevers, 19%; leavers, 20%).

- Contacted by the School. No pattern appeared. The ranges were as follows. Information for Records: 44% stayers to 50% leavers (nevers and joiners, 46%). Fund-raising: 36% joiners to 46% stayers (nevers, 41%; leavers, 43%). Volunteering: 23% joiners to 32% stayers (leavers and nevers, 30%).

Somewhat more parents of those who stayed in 4-H were in an organization with parents of other eighth graders than others. However, even among the stayers only about a third of the parents had organizational connections with other parents. The ranges were as follows. Organization with Other Parents: joiners, 21%, to stayers, 34% (nevers, 25%; leavers, 31%;). Knew parents of eighth grader's third friend: joiners, 49%, to stayers, 62% (nevers, 52%; leavers, 61%).

COMMENTS BY THE SENIOR AUTHOR

I was a 4-H member from 1943 to 1952, and an Extension Home Economist working with 4-H and Home Economics programs from 1952 to 1959. Since that time I have worked with 4-H staff on several evaluative studies, and as director of the Extension Volunteers study, I had an opportunity to interview 4-H volunteers in 12 counties across the United States. From that and other background experiences, I find it interesting to reflect upon these findings.

As I complete this report, there are three major implications upon which I want to comment.

1. Importance of 4-H developing continuing learners.
2. Need for Extension programs designed for teenagers.
3. Need for being realistic in expectations about results.
4. Need to support parents

Developing Continuing Learners

4-H needs to focus on those activities which help a young person be a continuing learner who is competent, independent, and able to adapt to change. Whatever the age of the individual, the continuing learner develops these characteristics:

- understands the power that learning brings;
- gets a thrill from learning;
- is able to learn from and evaluate the soundness of learning from experience, peers, and expert sources;
- can use a class and teacher effectively but can also learn from other sources;
- can independently seek out information from a variety of sources;
- is able to convert information into meaningful uses in his or her life space;
- is an active participant when taking part in a formal education program such as school, rather than a passive recipient;
- develops a variety of mental skills and knows when and how to use them; and
- develops the social skills needed in sharing with others in the acquisition and use of knowledge.

It is less what a youngster learns while taking part in 4-H that is important, but more that 4-H helps him or her develop the desire to learn and the tools needed in learning. In some places, this may mean reverting to earlier approaches of 4-H. Earlier volunteers and 4-H professionals emphasized the slogan "learning by doing" through which youngsters learned through their own experiences and from the information and advice they sought from a variety of sources. But over the last thirty years 4-H has perfected an instructional mode in which 4-H members become passive recipients of knowledge from a University storehouse through project bulletins and through project meetings where the leader is often instructed to impart information by talking at the project members. Currently in many states and counties Extension encourages project leaders to perform like school teachers did in the 1950's, while today the cutting edge teachers in the school system are using very different modes of instruction.

Being a continuing learner is a familiar phrase taken for granted by those in adult education. It is not new to many working with 4-H. Why give it so much emphasis right now? This particular complex quality is gaining high priority because of the rapidity of change. There is no way that we can build a battery of knowledge like an electrical cell and function off that battery for twenty or thirty years. In most areas the shelf life of a "knowledge battery" is very short as the world around us is constantly changing.

Even though we may give lip service to the phrase, how many of us have really thought about how one becomes a continuing learner? Although one can develop the capacity at any time, recent reports on workplace productivity call for us to help youngsters develop this mind set and the abilities that are needed to carry it out. When I first drafted this section, I was especially concerned about the attitudes toward school held by many eighth graders and very aware of the changes in the kinds of jobs available to youngsters when I drafted the next paragraphs. I felt that 4-H and other youth programs could do a good deal to assist the school system in helping youngsters prepare for work. But as I finished each of the next subpoints, I was talking about continuing to learn. So I decided to start these comments with a focus on helping youth build a thirst for and the ability to control their own continued learning.

There is an urgency today for 4-H and Extension's role to help all members succeed both in school and in life around and following school. Situations have changed. Is the focus of 4-H changing to prepare youngsters for those changing situations?

- **The world of work is changing.** The kinds of jobs available and the requirements for those jobs are changing. I was interested when one of our Agriculture Economists told of taking a test to see if he would qualify for a job on the assembly line at an auto factory. The computerized results quickly told him he did not have the right math skills. Unspecialized labor jobs have almost disappeared. Farming requires the same level of ability as business management and the professions. In the near future, the majority of the jobs will be in the service (social skills needed), technical (mental skills needed), and professional areas (social and mental skills needed). The information used in most of these jobs will change rapidly over the years to come. There is no way of equipping a person with knowledge this year that will be all which he or she needs for thirty or so years of work life. Therefore, rather than primarily equipping young people with today's information, we should be helping them develop the skills needed in seeking out, understanding, and appropriately applying the new information which is constantly being developed.

  4-H has always provided a vehicle which helped members enhance mental and social skills; but the professionals and volunteers working with 4-H may not have seen helping 4-H members develop such skills as a primary goal. I was a 4-H member at the time when 4-H was successful in helping girls and boys prepare for farming and homemaking. Developing generic skills which have helped me as a University Professor was incidental to the emphasis on learning content related to farming and homemaking. In the 1970's 4-H professionals adopted a focus on life skill development. However, at that time the majority of 4-H folks still interpreted life skills as competency in specific 4-H projects. The emphasis was still on learning content and the specific practices involved in projects such as foods, dairy, beef and photography. I saw little deliberate designing of experiences which were likely to develop specific mental and social skills.

  Fortunately, many of the 4-H activities such as ambassadors, judging teams, demonstrations, quiz bowls, and Olympics of the Mind provide those opportunities to some degree. Committee work where youngsters plan a float or a fair booth or take on a community project enhances the skills needed to work as a team in getting something done.

  In case the term "mental skills" does not bring much to your mind, let me call your attention to an excellent small publication for teachers, **Dimensions of Thinking, A Framework for Curriculum and Instruction,** which was published in 1988 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. In a few, clearly worded pages this book covers several key areas such as metacognition (the understanding of one's own mental activities), major thinking processes, critical and creative thinking. I especially liked the way they broke the often unchartered world of thinking down into a series of core skills. One can understand and work on individual skills, but it is very hard to help someone else to learn the very nebulous activity which is the whole of thinking. They grouped mental skills as follows.

  Focusing skills: defining problems and setting goals.
  Information gathering skills: observing, formulating questions.
  Remembering skills: encoding and recalling.
  Organizing skills: comparing, classifying, ordering, and representing.
  Analyzing skills: identifying attributes and components, identifying main ideas, identifying relationships and patterns, identifying errors.
  Generating skills: inferring, predicting, elaborating.
  Integrating skills: summarizing, restructuring.
  Evaluating skills: establishing criteria, verifying.

All of these skills require an active involvement of the mind of the learner in the activity that is at hand. This framework may be of thinking skills needed to succeed in a school which is highly oriented toward scientific method. I can see it best being applied to the learning of written content such as I experienced in school. However, someone who has been fortunate enough to come through courses which were organized around problem solving, probably can see each of these skills in a dynamic real-world way. Many of the above skills also apply in other areas of life than school, but other mental skills may need to be added if one were developing a life-focused framework. For example, the above framework says little about "feeling" in the sense of understanding and utilizing emotional reactions or "valuing".

Lately, I have not heard much about life skills from 4-H personnel. The concept seems to have been replaced first by a focus on self-concept and now by an emphasis on youth at risk. Special concern for youngsters who are at risk is excellent. However, the major emphasis seems to be either in terms of being at risk because of family characteristics which some say are a hindrance, or being at risk in terms of social behavior such as using drugs or alcohol or being active sexually. Unfortunately, less attention is being given to being at risk in terms of school and work success. Too many Extension administrators have written 4-H off as old hat and appear to quietly trying to get rid of it. Too few administrators recognize that a flexible program like 4-H may be just what many youngsters coming from risky home environments need. It was encouraging that the NELS data show that 4-H programs do reach youngsters who are most likely to be at risk.

- **Schools are changing.** Taxpayer revolts and increasing costs mean that some schools are quietly phasing out some of the programs which were especially useful in helping youngsters build knowledge and skills beyond the areas that are covered in the basic curriculum. Even though youngsters need more and better preparation for their work lives, they also need excellent preparation for their roles as family members, citizens, and well-rounded persons with well-established leisure interests. Nonschool programs may need to be alert and provide more opportunities for youth to explore and learn in these other areas. For example, as schools phase out Home Economics and Shop courses, 4-H may pick up the task of helping boys and girls learn basic minimums in relation to maintaining a contemporary household. 4-H and other nonschool programs may be the only access that some youngsters of medium or low talent will have to Art and Music. Rather than functioning regardless of the school or sometimes in competition with it, it is essential that those working with volunteers be very aware of what is happening in the local school. It is important to support or supplement the schools' activities in such a way that activities are attractive to those youngsters who do not like school.

- **Schools are becoming less comfortable and supportive of youngsters with less ability.** In recent years, college preparation and the dictates of college admission have taken a stranglehold of some schools. Such programs remain extremely important. However, many youngsters need additional orientation and help to succeed in post-high school educational programs. Tech-prep, or a new emphasis on helping all youngsters prepare for technical school, and college-bound youngsters prepare for the world of work, may help. When I graduated from high school, the majority of students took a general course and had no trouble finding satisfying and economically adequate work. Now there are very few positions available to those who have taken a general course in high school and have minimal skills. But high schools may be slow to phase out "general programs."

  Even though the high school graduate with a general course and no further schooling will have difficulty, those who drop out of school before graduating will have even more difficulty. Youngsters drop out of school for many reasons. One reason is that they cannot equate the content of courses with what they see as important in their lives. I found responses to the questions dealing with attitude toward school especially worrisome. This is an era which requires continued learning from cradle to grave. If this high of a percentage are turned off rather than caught by formal learning, and if they fail to build the skills needed to secure and process information on their own, how successful will they be in

continuing learning throughout the rest of their lives? 4-H can be very effective in helping youngsters understand how the basic studies in math, science, communications, and social studies can be very useful in the real world. It can be of special help to those youngsters who are least comfortable within the formal school system. In some respects, this may be going back in 4-H history. Early in this century, farm kids who were staying on the farm had similar trouble with formal schooling and 4-H made a significant difference in their lives. Now the need is not in relation to one occupation, but in relation to generalizable skills including the desire and ability to keep on learning.

4-H's quiet preparation of youngsters as continuing learners needs to start with early programs including Clover Buds. An emphasis on work and on continuing learning within and outside of school might or might not be announced to kids. It certainly should not be announced if kids have a negative attitude toward school.

Programs for Teens

4-H has a tendency to concentrate on attempting to serve teens by attempting to retain and contain teens as continuing members of 4-H. It is very clear that while this is attractive and beneficial to some young people, 4-H and other programs like them do not reach the majority of early teens. Teens find time for the programs that interest them. Individual project-focused learning within a highly structured, adult-dominated program has little appeal to youngsters who feel a need for greater social interaction and the need to test their own independent wings.

If Extension really wants to be of help to teens at a point in life where youngsters may be most likely at risk regardless of family background, it must be creative in the kind of programs that it develops. For example, more attention needs to be given to short-term cooperative activities where three or more compatible youngsters are working together on a short-term common goal which they see as valuable to others as well as enjoyable and valuable to themselves. If an adult works with the team, that adult must be "laid back" and be supportive rather than directive, a facilitator rather than a controller. There are several examples within the 4-H program of such activities that have appealed to teens - for example, one-act plays or getting a combo ready for a music festival, a task force in charge of cleaning up a cemetery, or trying to get a road sign put in place, taking part in or coaching a judging team, or organizing and being in charge of some county-wide activity like a foods review or demonstration day. Many clubs routinely carry on community service activities. Some engage in advocacy projects. However, in most counties, in order to take part in such activities most teens have to go along with the other 4-H offerings and requirements so that they have access to the activities they prefer.

The qualities of programs that are most likely to reach and attract teens are those which will drive efficiency-minded, overworked Extension personnel and leaders wild. It is much more convenient both for Extension and for volunteers to work with the same group of youngsters for several years. Think how confusing it is to work with four or five on one activity or community project for a few weeks and then to form into a new group with somewhat different participants for another activity. It is much more efficient to try to get twenty teens to do the same thing in a large group, than to have five or six groups each working on different tasks or activities. Yet, teens need a chance for close work with a few peers as well as occasionally taking part in camps or conferences where they meet new people.

We need programs which help teens face and adjust to varying levels of success. Learning how to deal with partial failure and partial success is important. Developing skill in reflection and learning how to emotionally deal with reflection about self without undue preoccupation is important. Being unable to deal with views of oneself may be one reason for violence and suicide among teens.

The efficiency problem can be handled in much the same way that it is in other aspects of the program. One attracts some "key" teens who remain involved and provide leadership in the various activities and projects that small groups develop. The adult volunteer or the Extension agent works with this small core of teens who then attract, encourage, and support teams to form and reform around them. It takes patience to sit through all of the sociality before teens decide upon what they are going to do. But it is from the sociality that they are learning as much as from what they actually do. Because an adult who is not used to this age group may not even understand the communication they are using to come to their decision, it may be very important to work with and through key teens..

Finally, some may think of problems in changing an award system from one that insists upon individual effort to one which recognizes effective work of a group. I have been keeping my eye on how the concept of cooperative learning is progressing in the K-12 system. I first heard of it from a group of almost fanatical teachers at a presentation at the World Future Society in 1989. Last year two of the middle school teachers in my class told about how they were evaluating such work. It is possible to do so. Unfortunately, it takes time for ideas to spread through systems. In the case of 4-H and Extension there is a double spread involved. The "intake" people within Extension have to be comfortable that a new idea in K-12 education is really working, so they watch the spread in the K-12 systems. Then, it takes even more time for the idea to grow and move in Extension. It is no wonder that much of the instructional base of 4-H is based upon Tylerian approaches which spread through the school system after World War II.

Then there is the minor/major problem of whether or not such short informal activities really should be called 4-H. Those dedicated to the multi-year highly structured program may not want to share the emblem they hold dear with a different kind of activity. On the other hand, teens may not want to associate with the name of a program they see as being populated by youngsters under ten. When we asked middle school students at Beloit to fill in the sentence, "When I think of 4-H I think of...." we got a full range of answers including cows and clovers. But the an answer that appeared occasionally both in terms of 4-H and Scouts was "babies." Some youngsters evidently feel the need for new symbols to signify that they have left childhood and moved on toward adulthood.

Given all of that analysis, I think that:

a. Teens could profit greatly from some teen-developed and controlled activities which yield benefits both to the community and to themselves.

b. Extension could help volunteers in communities who understand teens to organize some special short-term activities for teens which could involve a great deal of learning about self, getting along with others, communication, and leadership.

c. Too few agencies and organizations controlled by adults are currently making the right activities available or making them available in the right way. Adults ideas of what should be often are too firmly set and adult patience is too short.

d. Some Extension agents and volunteers have done a wonderful job of providing a forum for the kinds of experiences that teens need. I often think of a 4-H club tour I attended during my first year as an Extension agent. Four 17-year-old boys showed me one canoe they had made together with the support of their young male 4-H leader. I doubt that I handled that experience well. Why, there was nothing in the 4-H literature or my eight years in a highly organized county 4-H program which prepared me for this departure from 4-H tradition. Yet, I often think about those older boys and how that leader, by ignoring tradition, had provided a very meaningful experience.

e. But the bottom line is that very few programs for early teens will be developed and succeed because too few adults are able to accept the kind of adult role needed to successfully help teenagers to continue their learning. Also, many potential volunteers have too strong ties to highly structured and highly organized programs. I sincerely hope that you as a reader will take steps to prove me wrong.

Realistic Expectations of Results

The lack of substantial difference between 4-H members and those who had never been in 4-H on such indicators as grades, behavior, smoking, and self-concept, offers an opportunity for me to speak out on changes needed in ways in which programs are evaluated.

1. **Expectations of results must be realistic in terms of the amount of exposure, potential impact, and other factors in the life of program participants.** It is probably inappropriate to have expected 4-H members to have better grades, not smoke, behave better in school, or have better self-concepts than those who were not in 4-H. That is wishful thinking on the part of those who have to defend the

budget. Informal, voluntary education programs which have no sanctions involved often set big, unattainable goals. In my view the setting of unattainable goals is great in that it keeps eyes focused on important things to which a program makes contributions. However, harm occurs if we believe that we can prove that all participants have met the goal and that our program was the only cause. We must recognize that it is not likely that the amount of contact that the average youngster has with the program can bring about those great goals in a short period of time through a few activities. The majority of 4-H members take part for only a few months sprinkled over two or three years when they are quite young. Fantastically dynamic changes do occur in some youngsters as a result of very little exposure to 4-H. However, that does not occur for all youngsters. We have to be more realistic about the value expected in various levels of program participants. Nonschool educational programs like 4-H work with family, school and other sources in helping youngsters develop life skills and a base for understanding changing information bases. With some youngsters, such programs do make a unique contribution if there is a problem related either to school or family. For most youngsters, however, the contribution of a nonschool program is supportive and additive in reinforcing or stimulating or adding to the stimulation provided by other sources. The fact that a unique gain solely attributed to 4-H does not occur, does not mean that such a program has no value to the youngster and family. Value to individuals often is counted in little things rather than the major goals espoused by the administrators of the program.

More attention needs to be given to identifying the "value" components which can accrue to youngsters and families through taking part in 4-H. For some it the greatest values comes from improving a specific skill; for others, it is "catching fire" in relation to a particular area of learning. For some it is the value of a constructive use of leisure time; for others, it is the joy of participating with an adult who cares or with peers who have similar interests and values, or the satisfaction of capturing a parent's attention for a few hours of shared activity and interest. For others, it is the new experiences away from home such as camps and award trips which the family is unable to provide. The values of the 4-H program attested to by youth and parents over the years often differ from the goals to which administrators want to hold the program accountable.

Although there are probably some general values that emerge regardless of the nature of the specific 4-H experience, more attention needs to be given to what kind of results it is realistic to expect from a few weeks contact with a program when a youngster was eight or nine. What can be realistically expected from a few weeks contact with a program when one is fourteen?

2. We need to understand diversity in gains rather than expecting uniform gains. One of the legacies of the Scientific Industrial Era is a lingering belief that a program should be able to move all youngsters sufficiently toward good goals. Our concept of evaluation stems back to the 1950's and views a program as a treatment, the effects of which can be measured preferably against a control from which a statistically significant difference should result. That concept is a "sheep-dip concept" which totally overlooks the variance in human beings. A group of people, in this case a group of youngsters, are supposed to be herded through a program (sheep-dip) and expected to come out the other side equally covered and benefiting equally from the dip.

Real life is much more complex. Youngsters vary greatly in their life situations. Most youngsters take something of value from a program like 4-H; some gain similar things, but relatively few need or get exactly the same things. As some youngsters are benefiting through 4-H, others are benefiting through other programs, or through the help of an especially resourceful family. Thus, when total results are examined such as comparing those who had participated in 4-H with those who had not as we did in this study, it is not surprising that relatively few of the impact measures showed major differences between those who were members and those who had never been in 4-H. That does not mean that 4-H has not been of benefit to the youngsters who took part in it. We do not know where the participants would have been if they had not taken part.

Programs need to give more attention to the gains of individuals from programs rather than expecting the same gain from all participants. Fortunately there is swelling support for research approaches which focus on understanding individuals within each person's own life context rather than attempting to generalize for a whole group.

Supporting Parents

The findings that many parents have little involvement with the school activities of their youngsters is scary. A great deal of joy and companionship can come about for both teens and parents when they can share activities. However, for the early teen, the parents' involvement often must be from afar rather than "hand-in-hand" as it might have been when the teen was younger. Some parents need help in making that adjustment. They do not realize that although teens need independence - for example, going to the football or basketball game with other teens - they appreciate the fact that their parents also are attending the game.

Lack of parent involvement is a particular problem with nonschool programs. One of the most frustrating parts of being a volunteer with the 4-H program is that in many communities parents pay little attention to the program. It is easy for the Extension agent and the 4-H volunteer to view this lack from their perspective and in terms of their own needs. They need parents to do this or that. They need the parent to understand the program in order to guide the teen. They need to feel that parents value the work they are doing. They need parents to fill labeled roles with clearly outlined duties to make the program succeed. As the frustration builds, it is easy to take the course of least resistance, to give up on parents, and to build a 4-H program that can be carried out with little parent involvement. They carry out instructional sessions with a project leader completely replacing the parent as the teacher. They stop inviting parents to events. They hire transportation and find people other than parents to volunteer when extra help is needed. After all, the program is for the kids, isn't it? They find ways to meet the program needs, and forget about meeting the needs of the parents and the needs of youth for sharing with their parents. 4-H personnel often think of parent involvement in the program as parents doing their share to keep the program going. They sometimes ignore considering how the program can be a vehicle for helping parents relate better to their children.

Kids need families. Parents of teens have a real challenge today. Most want to meet that challenge. Some may need help in doing so. Parenting is a stressful activity. It is essential that 4-H continue to coax and cajole parents into participating in their youngster's 4-H activities. It is equally important that 4-H volunteers and agents support rather than replace parents as they work with their youth in nonschool activities. It is important to redefine what is acceptable behavior on the part of a parent in relation to 4-H project work. I recall that when I was a 4-H member so much stress was put on my doing my own work that I lost out on countless hours that I could have spent with one of my parents working together in our garden.

4-H needs to continue to design activities in which youth and parents can take part in together. When I was interviewing in Texas, a family told me about an event in their fair where the family including the grandparents took part in the parade with the youngsters and their horses. Other counties sponsor family camps, family swims, and family ski weekends. It is essential that 4-H keep a family rather than a child focus. In local club situations this may make even more of a demand upon the time of the volunteer. It takes time to meet and periodically check in with the parents of each 4-H participant. Some are not easy to approach. But the act of approaching the parent and specially inviting them to take part in something (without coercing them into doing something) is an important part of keeping 4-H a family activity. It is worth thinking about each family individually and considering what kind of barrier keeps the specific parent or parents from spending an hour or two in a 4-H related activity. All parents do not have to volunteer and work within the program, but they do need to be helped to share an interest with their teen.

However, an emphasis on family participation makes one other demand upon those who organize such programs. It is essential that they take steps to assure that there is a "parent substitute" for those youngsters in family situations where it is absolutely impossible for a parent to take part. Family needs to be considered in its broadest terms so that youngsters are comfortable sharing with some other adult when a parent is out of the picture.

As I step down from my soap box, it is your turn. What did you find most meaningful in this data? What are your views about programs, program goals and how the effects of 4-H should be documented and judged?

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